LEV KAMENEV: A CASE STUDY IN 'BOLSHEVIK CENTRISM'

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation challenges the view that Lev Kamenev lacked a clear socialist vision and had no discernible objectives. It contends that Kamenev had an ideological line and political goals shaped by Ferdinand Lassalle. Kamenev adopted Lassalle's desire for a democratic socialist republic and his method to achieve end aims. Through dialogical discourse Kamenev aimed to gain allies by overcoming differences by focusing on points of agreement. This was his 'Bolshevik Centrism'. Ideologically, Kamenev absorbed Lassalle's concept of the 'Fourth Estate', which mandated proletarian culture first predominate in society before revolution could occur. This helps explain his opposition to revolution in 1905 and 1917, and sheds light on his assessment in the early 1920s that the Bolsheviks had not founded the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', but the 'dictatorship of the party'. In trying to overcome this reality he adapted Lassalle's vision for an all-encompassing selfless state and endeavoured to merge the party, the state, and the masses into one. His aspiration to win over peasants and workers placed him in a centrist position, whereby he used his authority to challenge Trotsky and Bukharin's leftist and rightist policies. However, under the one-party dictatorship his actions directly contributed to the rise of Stalin.

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Introduction

Historians have encountered great difficulties in positioning Lev Borisovich Rosenfeld (Kamenev) in the history of the Bolshevik party and the Soviet state from 1903 up to 1936. Notwithstanding his significance and prominence in the party there has not been a single worthy attempt to understand Kamenev's ideological position, despite there being numerous works exploring Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky, and Bukharin's motivations. This absence reflects a gap in our understanding of the theoretical range of opinions within the Bolsheviks and their impact on the development of the early Soviet state. The three dominant narratives in the existing literature concerning Kamenev raise more questions than they answer. The most prominent analysis is that he was a simple follower of Zinoviev. The second one is that he was an opportunist with no political or theoretical line whatsoever, and both of these views combined has led to the final commonly held conclusion that Kamenev was simply an inveterate party intriguer.

E.H. Carr offered the damning judgement that Kamenev always depended upon a leader, and that this 'weakness ultimately linked his fate with that of a man less intelligent, less upright, and in every way less attractive than himself.'[1] Robert V. Daniels wrote that after the October Revolution he became 'Zinoviev's shadow'.[2] Catherine Merridale contends that Kamenev followed Zinoviev's policies in the 1920s and that the two were essentially a 'duo' from 1917 onwards.[3] From their assessments there appears to be a moment in Kamenev's life where he simply stopped having his own ideological independent position and contented himself with party

[1] E.H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country: 1924-1926: Volume I,* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1970, p. 176.
[2] Robert V. Daniels, *The Conscience of the Revolution: Communist Opposition in Soviet Russia,* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960, p. 174.
[3] Catherine Merridale, *Moscow Politics and the Rise of Stalin: The Communist Party in the Capital, 1925-1932,* London: The Macmillan Press LTD, 1990, p. 30-31.

work devoid of his own intellectual contribution. It is rather odd that someone who challenged Lenin at key moments before the revolution (without Zinoviev!) and who in October 1917 led the charge to oppose a revolution would suddenly surrender his values for the remainder of his life. While it is true that someone can indeed change positions, Carr, Daniels, Merridale, and others provide no adequate explanations. Carr chalks Kamenev's conversion up to his lack of 'character' and 'intellect'. The depiction of Kamenev as a capable leader before 1917 and a follower with a weak 'character' afterwards is wrong and the characterisation of his personality untenable. Kamenev was after all the only Bolshevik ever bold enough to explicitly call for Stalin's removal straight to his face at a party congress. An explanation is needed that can either adequately explain Kamenev's abrupt personal change or one that can establish continuity that links the later Kamenev and his earlier self.

Carr is also responsible for popularising the second standard narration of Kamenev's political rise as it stems from his first inadequate summation. To him Kamenev was devoid of 'any clear vision of a goal...'.[4] In this light Kamenev was oddly an aimless Marxist with no immediate understanding of how to attain or move in the direction of socialism. Most historians brush off Kamenev as a non-entity in terms of developing party policy. Richard Pipes dismisses any independence of Zinoviev and Kamenev in their pre-revolutionary days by writing that they were simply Lenin's 'two most loyal followers'.[5] Stephen Cohen labels the two as Lenin's 'chief lieutenants' and nothing more.[6] Merridale in a brief biography of Kamenev's early political career cast off any notion that he had his own line, writing that despite his opposition there was

[4] Carr, *Socialism in One Country: 1924-1926: Volume I* , p. 177.
[5] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, New York: Vintage Books, 1990, p. 376.
[6] Stephen F. Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography,* London: Wildwood House LTD, 1973, p. 4.

'no consistent "Kamenevism"', and concluded that 'his thoughts and actions were not necessarily consistent, original, or admirable'.[7] Chris Ward writes that concerning Kamenev's role in the 1920s there is a 'broad consensus' among historians that he was 'bereft of any coherent goal'.[8] From Bogdanov, Lenin, Zinoviev and Lunacharsky to Bukharin, Stalin, and Trotsky, *all* the most prominent Bolshevik leaders *save* Kamenev have been evaluated by historians as having their own ideas, goals, and theoretical foundations. It is surprising that Kamenev could find himself among such men at the top-echelons of power without any convictions of his own.

There is a surprising consensus between Western historians and Soviet historians in their judgement that Kamenev's modus operandi was underhanded intrigue. The official Soviet explanation for Kamenev's actions was that he was an 'opportunist' 'vacillator', proven by aiding the leftist Trotsky in 1927 and then the rightist Bukharin and Ryutin in 1928 and 1932.[9] Ideology was unimportant in determining his position. Cohen contends that Kamenev moved against Bukharin and Stalin because he was 'jealous of Stalin's growing power'.[10] Stephen Kotkin insists that Kamenev was an 'inveterate intriguer'.[11] Boris Souvarine stripped Kamenev of any theoretical foundation by maintaining that Kamenev's alliance with Zinoviev and Stalin was motivated out of fear of being 'deprived of the Lenin inheritance'.[12] Isaac Deutscher echoes Trotsky's version of events with the charge that Zinoviev and Kamenev fabricated 'Trotskyism'

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[7] Catherine Merridale, 'The Making of a Moderate Bolshevik: an Introduction to L.B. Kamenev's Political Biography', *Soviet History, 1917-1953: Essays in Honour of R.W. Davies,* eds., Julian Cooper, Maureen Perrie, and E.A. Rees, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995, p. 23 and 30.
[8] Chris Ward, *Stalin's Russia*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 20.
[9] *Sed'maya (aprel'skaya) vserossiiskaya konferentsiya RSDRP (bol'shevikov): protokoly*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1958, p. 382-383.
[10] Cohen, p. 162.
[11] Stephen Kotkin, *Stalin: Paradoxes of Power, 1878-1928,* New York: Penguin Press, 2014, Kindle File, chapter 11.
[12] Boris Souvarine, *Stalin: A Critical Survey of Bolshevism,* London: Secker and Warburg, 1939, p. 381.

from a thirst for political power,[13] and Stalin's belief in Kamenev's machinations for usurping authority ended with Kamenev being branded an 'enemy of the people' and executed for 'counter-revolutionary' activities. Dmitri Volkogonov slightly varied his interpretation by indicating Kamenev and Zinoviev acted out of fear of dictatorship rather than personal power.[14] All these secondary accounts interpret their actions by their despair of losing power with little to no credit given to any ideological reasons that may have compelled them to behave as they did.

The scholarly literature on Kamenev in 1917 and before directly contradicts the view of Kamenev lusting for power. Rex A. Wade, Geoffrey Swain, and Leonard Schapiro all uphold the notion that in 1917 Kamenev's desire for a socialist coalition government was sincere.[15] This creates enormous difficulties for historians charging Kamenev with 'opportunism' and a desire to cling to power in the 1920s as it is inconsistent with the Kamenev of 1917 who was willing to diminish his party's authority, and subsequently his own role in a new a government, to uphold an all-socialist democracy. Adam Bruno Ulam stresses Kamenev's idealism and political commitment in explaining his pre-revolutionary career, writing that Kamenev was 'little suited for the role of leader of the underground' and that it was a 'strange quirk of fate which thrust him forth as a militant revolutionary rather than as scholar and archivist of Marxism.'[16] Kamenev certainly could not have been both the lustful power monger lurking behind the scenes to intrigue against his opponents for power alone and the pre-revolutionary man who was a 'weak'

[13] Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed: Trotsky 1921-1929*, Thetford: Lowe & Brydone Printers Limited, 1978, p 263.
[14] Dmitri Volkogonov, *Trotsky: The Eternal Revolutionary*, trans., Harold Shukman, New York: The Free Press, 2007, p. 269.
[15] See Rex A. Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 249, Geoffrey Swain, *The Origins of the Russian Civil War*, New York: Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1996, p. 55, and Leonard Schapiro, *The Origin of the Communist Autocracy: Political Opposition in the Soviet State, First Phase 1917-1922*, London: G-Bell and Sons, LTD, 1956, p. 73.
[16] Adam Bruno Ulam, *Stalin: The Man and His Era*, New York: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2007, p. 125.

'follower' willing to sacrifice his own authority for Social-Democratic unity. Again, while it is possible that something affected an irrevocable change in Kamenev, these contradictory assessments remain unexplained. Underlying this is an unfounded consensus among historians that ideology played no significant role in shaping his positions other than he was a Marxist.

Jürg Ulrich's biography of Kamenev fails to really resolve these questions. The study makes little use of the archives, and Kamenev's views are presented without analysis and little effort is made to understand his motives. Important events such as Kamenev's 1907 boycott position and opposition to the 1905 revolution are scarcely mentioned, and he generally agrees with historians that Kamenev's struggle with Trotsky in 1923 was simply over power.[17] Kamenev's alliance with Trotsky in the 'United Opposition' is left without any explanation.[18] Ulrich also avoids drawing any conclusions about Kamenev's meeting with Bukharin in 1928, stating that Kamenev had acted as a 'psychotherapist'.[19] In Kamenev's dispute with Stalin, Ulrich is certain that Kamenev's internationalism was sincere, but that was just one of Kamenev's struggles.[20] There is no attempt to connect Kamenev's ideas over time. The study reads as a summary of Kamenev's articles and speeches rather than a historical work, and unfortunately, there are no new conclusions in his text that have not already been stated elsewhere.

Chris Ward asserts that biography is a researcher's dead end in attempting to understand the 1920s and Stalin's political rise.[21] However, it is clear that due to the lack of knowledge on the matter a Kamenev political biography would shed light on an aspect of Bolshevism which has

[17] Jürg Ulrich, *Lev Kamenev: Umerennyi bol'shevik*, Moscow: Knizhnyi dom 'Librokom', 2013, p. 224.
[18] Ibid., p. 220.
[19] Ibid., p. 255
[20] Ibid., p. 242
[21] Ward, p. 32.

hitherto been ignored. Kamenev's opposition to the revolutions of both 1905 and 1917, Duma participation, the Cheka, Trotsky, Bukharin and Stalin are all well-known, but his theoretical position and reasons are most certainly not. Without an understanding of Kamenev's theoretical or ideological position at each critical junction in the development of Bolshevism historians lack the means for properly understanding the issues at stake.

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate Kamenev's ideological position as a means of illuminating the inner workings of the Bolshevik party at its highest levels and to ascertain to what degree Kamenev's views on socialism influenced the development of Bolshevism and the early history of the Soviet state. The dissertation adopts a predominantly theoretical approach. Kamenev's politics are examined to ascertain if there is a commonality in his decision making and to explore how his views influenced policy. His personal life, his relationships, and his associations with historical figures are included only as far as they are important to understanding his position. For example, his relationship with his wife, Olga Kameneva, their divorce and his re-marriage are largely ignored and the nitty-gritty of party infighting is at times sacrificed to keep focus on the theoretical underpinnings of Kamenev's worldview.

The first chapter traces how from the outset Kamenev challenged his opponents through a Lassallean paradigm under a Bolshevik banner and sets up the premise that Kamenev's outlook can be defined as 'Bolshevik Centrism'. Chapters 2 and 3 focus on 1917. They explore the sharp divergence between Lenin and Kamenev and how they treated opponents, as well as define the two men's key ideological disagreements over revolution. Chapter 4 explores the dilemmas which Kamenev confronted in maintaining his principles in the face of civil war. It also highlights the initial success of his 'Bolshevik Centrism' in England. Chapter 5 illustrates the

failure of Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' to resolve Trotsky's schism with the party. Chapter 6 chronicles the power and theoretical conflict between Kamenev and Stalin and explores Kamenev's alternative views on NEP and 'state capitalism'. Previously neglected by historians, the chapter clearly defines the centrist objectives of the 'platform of the four', its theoretical basis, and questions the validity of the conceptualisation of Bukharin as a 'moderate'. Chapter 7 explores Kamenev's role in the 'United Opposition' and how it maintained the 'middle path' of 1925 and was not a total revival of left-wing idealism or Trotskyism. Chapter 8 finally answers why Kamenev met with Bukharin and evaluates the viability of Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' beyond 1928. Finally, chapter 9 traces Kamenev's final struggle with Stalin through his Aesopian writings and his infamous show trial.

The first four chapters primarily utilise published materials, from newspapers, memoirs, collections, and journals, simply because there is very little material in the archives prior to 1921 that go beyond what is already found in print. Even his personal letters available from this period prove of little value. However, in exploring Kamenev's mission to England in 1920 the Parliamentary Archives in London were invaluable and were utilised accordingly. The remainder of the dissertation relies heavily on Kamenev's personal archival fond at the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), which contained a wealth of unused material. The State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) also had numerous insightful documents previously unseen concerning Kamenev's role in STO. However, within these fonds there is an absolute dearth of material concerning his political thoughts, ideas, or relationship with Stalin beyond 1929. Only material surrounding his work at various publishing houses remains.

Chapter 1

Russian Social-Democracy began with Georgi Plekhanov, who was the first to truly apply Marxist principles to Russian conditions. Capitalism was only at its nascent at the end of the nineteenth century, but Plehkanov postulated that this gave the working class an advantage. The experiences from Western Europe would prove as the roadmap to develop the working class in Russia at a faster pace. From the outset the proletariat could coalesce around a political party capable of influencing the Russian state's development and help topple absolutism and then proceed to challenge bourgeois constitutionalism until the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' could be established through revolution.[22] Social-Democracy's goal was to politically awaken the consciousness of the working class in its conflict with the bourgeoisie. In 1895 Lenin joined Plekhanov, but his 1902 *What Is to Be Done?* in time began to divide Social-Democrats over the role the party should play in developing class consciousness and how it should organise. Lenin's outline for an underground network of professional revolutionaries jarred with Yu. Martov's vision of a broad-based party and Russian Social-Democracy split between Lenin's Bolsheviks and Martov's Mensheviks. Despite their intense focus on the working class, both factions were caught unprepared for the Revolution of 1905. Workers and peasants distraught by a losing war with Japan and terrible living conditions revolted. Whereas the Bolsheviks pointed to the December Moscow Uprising of 1905 as evidence of the working class's advanced consciousness and capabilities in leading the revolutionary struggle, the Mensheviks feared the uprising proved the contrary; the proletariat was not yet prepared and had to aid the bourgeoisie in toppling the Tsar before it could focus on its political objectives. These disagreements eventually divided the

[22] Samuel H. Baron, *Plekhanov: The Father of Russian Marxism*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963, p. 114-117.

two factions into separate parties in 1912. Kamenev joined Lenin's Bolsheviks in 1902 and was a secondary figure in the Bolshevik leadership. He aided Lenin against the Mensheviks, agitated for the Bolshevik line in Russia among the rank and file, wrote assiduously defending Bolshevik ideas, and helped expel A.A. Bogdanov from their faction's ranks. Historians have traditionally viewed Kamenev in this period as nothing more than an ideological rubber stamp to Lenin's political line. It is the aim of this chapter to test the validity of that claim.

The Influence of Ferdinand Lassalle and *What Is to Be Done?*

To date there has not been any attempt by historians to understand the ideological reasons Kamenev[23] took so quickly to the Bolsheviks and it has been largely assumed that Karl Marx and Lenin brought Kamenev to socialism. This, however, is incorrect and is rather shameful because the study of Kamenev's early political career reveals an important influence on Bolshevism that has hitherto been largely ignored.

Both Kamenev's middle-class parents, Boris Rozenfeld and Mariya Federovna, were bright, university educated, and active in the radical student movement of the 1870s, but they were not the reason Kamenev became a socialist. While his father was working in Tiflis as an engineer on the Caucasus railway, Kamenev read the work that inspired him to pursue a life-long revolutionary career.[24] As Kamenev later dictated to his secretary F. Muzika, Ferdinand Lassalle's 'Working Man's Programme' had imbued in him his 'general desire and interest in the working class movement'.[25] Lassalle, he maintained, was *the reason* he came to socialism.

[23] Lev Borisovich Rozenfeld was born 18 July 1883 in Moscow.
[24] Boris had studied at the Petersburg Technological Institute and participated in student protests.
[25] F. Muzika was Kamenev's secretary throughout the 1920s and 1930s. See F. Muzika, *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar': Russkogo Bibliograficheskogo Instituta Granat*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo 'Kniga', 1989, p. 162-170.

Kamenev's gymnasium teacher later recalled that as a teenager Kamenev's interest in socialist thinkers was almost exclusively dedicated to Lassalle.[26]

Kamenev's experience was not unique. Both Plekhanov and Lev Trotsky were inspired by Lassalle.[27] According to Isaac Deutscher, in his youth Trotsky had even dreamed of becoming the 'Russian Lassalle'.[28] The underlying difference was that the imprint of Lassalle on Kamenev was more profound and long lasting. While Jürg Ulrich has noted the association, he failed to connect it to Social-Democracy, to Kamenev's ideas, or to Bolshevism.[29]

Lassalle was a remarkable, eloquent, and daring figure and is rightly considered the father of German Social-Democracy. He was a devout student of Hegel and although he agitated on behalf of workers in the revolution of 1848, he remained unsuccessful in politics until 1862 when he took up the cause of universal suffrage on behalf of the working class. He attempted numerous times throughout the 1850s to befriend Karl Marx and on occasion even lent him money, but Lassalle's vanity and differences of opinion proved distasteful to the London-exiled Marx who tolerated him primarily because Lassalle laboured on his behalf to print his articles in German periodicals. To his followers Lassalle's persuasive and impassioned oratory made him a living legend. To his detractors such as Eduard Bernstein and Friedrich Engels, the latter viewed Lassalle negatively as a 'demagogue' and the former claimed Lassalle cared only for '*himself* – *his* aims, and *his* plans'.[30] These claims, however, are grossly exaggerated. Engels and Marx

[26] Ulrich, p. 30.
[27] Baron, p 15.
[28] Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed, Trotsky: 1879-1921,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970, p. 34.
[29] Ulrich, p. 30.
[30] See Friedrich Engels, letter 'Engels to Karl Kautsky' in Karl Marx, 'Critique of the Gotha programme', Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1972, p. 70, and Eduard Bernstein, *Ferdinand Lassalle as a social reformer,* trans., Eleanor Marx-Aveling, London: Swan Sonnenschein, Kindle File, chapter 2.

were simply envious of a man who could connect directly with workers at a time their writings stirred very few. Bernstein's charge that Lassalle was dictatorial in his views is rather unconvincing. Lassalle had a sincere desire to cooperate. David Footman has shown that Lassalle struggled to convince Marx and Engels to collaborate on a newspaper, and that it was they who had refused him. Lassalle had also wished to join the Communist League, and there too he was turned away.[31] Loathed by fellow socialists as he was, he far outstripped Marx in notoriety in the two years before his death.

The ideas outlined in Lassalle's 'Working Man's Programme' was what galvanised the German labour movement. The most influential component to his work was what he called the working class 'Fourth Estate', a concept he borrowed from the 1789 French Revolution. The 'Third Estate' had initially consisted of both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat fighting to overthrow the French monarchy and unseat the dominance of the privileged 'First' and 'Second' 'Estates' (the nobility and the clergy) who enjoyed power based on the ownership of land. As Lassalle and Marx saw it, within the 'Third Estate' the bourgeoisie betrayed workers when it established a government granting 'privileges' based on capital.[32] In 1862 Lassalle emphasized that there was now a 'Fourth Estate', comprised exclusively of the working class which had its own values of equality, morality, and collective ownership. This idea led to his greatest contribution, the founding of the first completely *independent* working class political party, the German Workers' Association, the precursor to the Social-Democratic Party.

[31] David Footman, *Ferdinand Lassalle: Romantic Revolutionary,* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947, p. 71.
[32] Ferdinand Lassalle, *The Working Man's Programme*, trans., Edward Peters, London: The Modern Press, 1884, p. 36.

Although many of Lassalle's contentions would in time prove false, such as his 'Iron Law of Wages', the reason Lassalle has traditionally been omitted from discussions surrounding Russian Social-Democracy is two-fold. First, Marx and Engels painstakingly used their influence to stamp out his ideas. Marx and Engels were so uncompromising with Lassalle that they often threatened to abandon Social-Democracy if his views trumped their own.[33] This then leads to the second reason. When Marxism became the official predecessor to Leninism under Stalin, the Soviet government strongly admonished him. Whereas as late as 1922 Lassalle was officially praised in Soviet Russia as 'one of the greatest people of the past century',[34] under Stalin he was nearly vilified. In 1935 a Soviet play entitled, *Dictator: The Death of F. Lassalle,* unjustly blackened his image by absurdly suggesting he was a working class 'traitor'.[35] Despite his endorsement of revolution, official Soviet sources onwards branded Lassalle an 'opportunist' and his ideas 'petty-bourgeois socialism' because he operated through legal channels.[36]

Marx and Engels strongly disagreed with Lassalle over his conceptions of the state and revolution. Lassalle had outlined that the bourgeois dominated 'Third Estate' had gained strength through acquiring capital, ever eroding the political base of the feudal nobility which claimed authority based on land. Some nobles recognized that their political power was in jeopardy and began to acquire capital in similar fashion to the bourgeoisie. The fundamental structure of society thus transformed culturally before the 1789 revolution completed it politically. Lassalle therefore envisioned that proletarian culture based on equality would become the dominant social

[33] See Friedrich Engels, letter 'Engels to August Bebel', in Karl Marx, 'Critique of the Gotha programme', p. 44, and Bernstein, chapter 5.
[34] *Izvestiya,* April 23, 1922, p. 3.
[35] N.N. Shapovalenko, *Diktator: Smert' F. Lassalya*, Moscow: "TsED RAM", 1935, p. 16.
[36] V.A. Morozov, 'Lassal', Ferdinand', *Bol'shaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya,* 3rd edition, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Sovetskaya entsiklopediya', 1973, p. 173.

value system prior to a revolution which would install a socialist republic. One of the few political scientists to truly understand the essential difference between Lassalle and Marx on the state was J.L. Talmon, who wrote that contrary to Marx, with Lassalle 'it is not the State that will wither away, but rather society will be entirely absorbed into the State.'[37] There was an evolutionary process in Lassalle's vision that did not sit well with Marx. Treating the state as an independent entity meant there was some leeway in using the existing non-proletarian state to the proletariat's advantage. This jarred with Marx, who contended that state structures were an outgrowth of bourgeois hegemony and had to be dismantled.[38]

However utopian Lassalle's views were that society would essentially rise above class conflict with an inherently selfless state, it meant that opponents could be won over; they did not have to be eliminated by force. As Lassalle wrote in the 'Working Man's Programme' this was because after revolution the working class would become enlightened to such a degree that other social classes would adopt the working class's inherent sense of equality because '*its* interests' were 'the interest of the entire human race'.[39] The state would only expand in composition. In contrast, Marx believed that any future proletarian state would require continual repression of the bourgeoisie.

The young Kamenev internalised Lassalle's views on the development of society and the state with an enduring idealism that would mould his decisions the rest of his life. The key feature Kamenev completely absorbed from Lassalle was his dialogism, meaning, Lassalle's

[37] J.L. Talmon, 'Lassalle between Fichte and Hegel', *Revue européenne des sciences sociales,* 18.52, 1980, p. 92.
[38] Marx, 'Critique of the Gotha Programme', p. 26.
[39] Lassalle, *The Working Man's Programme*, p. 55. See also Ferdinand Lassalle, *Printsipy truda v sovremennom obshchestve,* St. Petersburg: Knigoizdatel'stvo 'Molot', 1905, p. 28.

resolve to find unifying objectives to overcome disagreements by engaging in dialogue.[40] As Robert S. Wistrich has written, Lassalle was able to galvanise workers because he took notice of worker grievances and could 'translate them into political action.'[41] The Social-Democratic founder listened to workers from different industries and areas and found whatever common ground they had and emphatically endorsed that commonality to organize the working class as a whole. He was not an 'opportunist' because he worked through legal channels; he strategically saw that by championing universal suffrage openly, workers from across Germany would begin to think about political objectives on a national scale. This proved so effective that Lassalle broke up the traditional practice of workers limiting themselves to local organisation.[42] Listening to competing views and then combing them for points of agreement to forge unity was why he, and no one else, had established the first workers' party.

By the time Russian Social-Democracy was founded in 1898, Lassalle's works had already been in Russian translation for nearly 30 years. His first collected works appeared in 1870, reprinted again in 1882. The 'Working Man's Programme' was published separately in Russian as early as 1902. His first Russian biographer, V.Ya. Klassen, praised his achievements as early as 1896.[43] Bernstein's more critical and less idealistic biography appeared in Russian in 1906. Lassalle's ideas were therefore well-known to Russian socialists and as yet untarnished he was lauded as a shining example of how one man could advance the working class movement.

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[40] The use of the terms associated with 'dialogism' and 'monologism' throughout this dissertation were heavily inspired from Richard Sakwa's application of the terms in discussing post-Cold War relations between Russia and the West. For this dissertation they are used in connection with Kamenev and Lenin and how they communicated with their opponents and allies. See Richard Sakwa, 'Axiological vs dialogical politics in contemporary Europe', *Polis*, no. 2, 2014, p. 8-17.

[41] Robert S. Wistrich, 'Lassalle as Gladiator', *European Judaism,* 10.1, 1975, p. 6.

[42] Isaiah Berlin, *Karl Marx: His Life and Environment*, 4th edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 154.

[43] V.Ya. Klassen, *F. Lassal': Ego zhizn', nauchnye trudy i obshchestvennaya deyatel'nost'*, St. Petersburg: "Obshchestvennaya pol'za", 1896.

Plekhanov was among the first who embraced Lassalle's agitation and organizational views to be something truly of a 'new socialism'. Adhering to Marx, he dismissed Lassalle's economic views as 'utopian',[44] but Plekhanov relied on Lassalle where Marx fell short, namely in judicial matters.[45] Similar to Bernstein, Plekhanov understood that the underlying difference in theoretical orientation between Marx and Lassalle was that the latter's socialism derived from a judicial perspective and the former's economic. That was why Plekhanov denounced constitutionalism in 1883. Lassalle had maintained in his *System of Acquired Rights* that civil law was an expression of economic reality and that a citizen's rights, even if favourable to workers through some form of constitution, were politically charged. This guided Plekhanov ideologically to spurn 'economism', as winning economic gains through legislature meant empowering the bourgeoisie if social relations were left unchanged.[46] Later after 1905 when Social-Democrats denounced the October Manifesto, some Social-Democrats, Lenin and Kamenev specifically, explicitly used Lassalle's views on constitutionalism to justify the continuation of the revolutionary struggle against the Tsar.[47]

In 1899 Lenin acknowledged the debt owed to Lassalle for breaking the working class from the liberal bourgeoisie.[48] Lassalle had uncompromisingly detested the bourgeois liberal Progressists of his time and had even compromised himself by trying to dupe Bismark into implementing state-sponsored socialist cooperatives to weaken bourgeois influence. Although anti-bourgeois sentiment was something shared by the majority of socialists, Lassalle had

[44] G.V. Plekhanov, *N.G. Chernyshevskii*, St. Petersburg: "Shipovnik", 1910, p. 304-305.
[45] Bernstein, chapter 4.
[46] G.V. Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works*, volume 1, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974, p. 74.
[47] See V.I. Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 17, p. 345, and Lev Kamenev, *Mezhdu dvumya revolutsiyami*, Moscow: Tsentropoligraf, 2003, p. 489-490.
[48] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 4, p. 169.

significantly amplified the detestation of bourgeois political groups. Lenin's shared enmity to the bourgeoisie is of no small importance. It later drove a tactical wedge between Lenin and Yu. Martov when the latter favoured limited cooperation with the bourgeoisie in 1905 and onward.

Lenin understood that the difficulties of socialist agitation in Russia were paramount. If caught disseminating propaganda, staging protests, or rousing workers, revolutionaries faced arrest, imprisonment, or exile. Robert Service has shown that Lenin's 1902 *What Is to Be Done?* was a platform to mitigate organisational setbacks when fellow socialists were removed from the political scene by the Tsarist police.[49] Adopted from the People's Will Party, the model of organization Lenin advocated in *What Is to Be Done?* was that the party should be comprised of a small group of leading revolutionaries directing a web of party cells. This could successfully operate underground because it was centrally directed yet had divided parts capable of withstanding police repression. His proposal was to create a party directed through an illegal central newspaper published from abroad to avoid police repression.

Kamenev first read *What Is to Be Done?* in Paris shortly after he had joined the Social-Democratic Party in 1902. Earlier that year he had entered the law faculty of Moscow University[50] when student organizations were in protest over the university's strict policy that student meetings had to be supervised by rector appointed professors.[51] Kamenev was an astute observer of how the student's rather open agitation was promptly squashed when the police arrested the student leadership on 29 January. Showing great tactical acumen he kept aloof from

[49] Robert Service, *The Bolshevik Party in Revolution 1917-1923: A Study in Organisational Change*, London: The Macmillan Press LTD, 1979, p. 24 and 206.
[50] Kamenev's father funded his education despite Kamenev's refusal to become an engineer like his father. Although Kamenev never stated it specifically, it is likely that he chose the profession of a lawyer to mimic Lassalle.
[51] At the head of the unrest was another Caucasus student, Irakli Tsereteli, a future Menshevik rival.

the police, secretly organising the Second United Council of *zemlyachestva* to coordinate student protests in St. Petersburg and Moscow. Then on 13 March he emerged, brazenly leading a student-worker rally down Tverskaya Street. The police quickly incarcerated Kamenev as one of the rally leaders in Moscow's Butyrki and Taganka prisons. He was then expelled from the university and released on condition he returned to Tiflis under police supervision.[52] Soon after he joined the underground Social-Democratic Party, whose members were so impressed with his efforts that they sent him on to Paris to give a first-hand account of the student events to the *Iskra* editorial board. When he read *What Is to Be Done?* there, he gravitated to its organisational outline as his own experience with police repression had shown the impossibility of overt agitation.

Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg were not convinced that having tight control over the party to escape police outweighed the loss of the party's democratic norms. Trotsky felt that in Lenin's schema the party would be in danger of substituting itself for a politically developed proletariat as centralisation and limited party membership ensured the dominance of a conspiratorial directing few.[53] Trotsky believed that this Jacobin thread within *What Is to Be Done?* would mean that the most revolutionary elements within the party would remain a minority.[54] Rosa Luxemburg later complained that Lenin's style of organization would suppress independent working class consciousness and would enslave the proletariat to the revolutionary cause and forego its natural development.[55]

[52] Muzika, p. 162-170.
[53] Leon Trotsky, *Our Political Tasks (1904),* London: New Park Publication, 1979, p. 33.
[54] Ibid., p. 123.
[55] Rosa Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution and Leninism or Marxism?,* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1961, p. 91.

Although Kamenev never directly replied to the two's attacks on Lenin's organizational plan, it is important to understand that Kamenev viewed *What Is to Be Done?* through the lens of Lassalle, and from this understanding it is possible to discern why the criticism of Trotsky and Luxemburg was never enough to turn him away from Lenin. Lars T. Lih has pointed to a striking passage in *What Is to Be Done?* where Lenin relies on Lassalle to illustrate how Social-Democrats could work from *within* the spontaneous worker movement to divert them from 'trade-union' consciousness.[56] Employers in Germany had typically placated worker grievances with small economic concessions to local trade-unions when unrest surfaced. This practice was extremely effective at stonewalling national unity because enterprises selectively granted concessions to specific worker groups to break the chain of widespread discontent.[57] Trotsky's argument that the party would only act in the 'interests' of the proletariat and not be a true working class organ failed to convince Kamenev because he understood from Lassalle's example that it was the party's responsibility to first free the proletariat from their unequal relationship with their oppressors before the proletariat could truly develop.

Alan Shandro has demonstrated that Lenin's misgivings about the 'spontaneity' of the working class were indeed out of worry that the bourgeoisie would subvert the movement, and he is right to argue that Lenin did not oppose worker initiative; it was that the proletariat needed Social-Democracy to provide the proletariat 'strategic independence' and as its class consciousness awakened, its leaders would be able to advance Marxist ideology from within the

[56] Lih is one of the few Soviet historians who warrant Lassalle attention in shaping Lenin's views. See Lars T. Lih, *Lenin Rediscovered: What Is to Be Done? in Context*, Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2008, p. 55. See also V.I. Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978, p. 41.

[57] Lassalle complained that accepting local gains with labour protest would be as if 'The mountain labored, and brought forth a mouse.' See Ferdinand Lassalle, *Lassalle's Open Letter to the National Association of Germany*, trans., John Ehmann and Fred Bader, New York: International Publishing Co., 1901, p. 10.

working class movement.[58] Kamenev was not forsaking Lassalle's direct connection with workers as Trotsky complained; he endorsed strict party leadership to combat Russian conditions so that the Social-Democratic connection could be made with workers in the first place.

Another reason Kamenev was drawn to Lenin was because Lassalle's emphasis on the political struggle had for some time been sorely neglected. Prior to 1905 the majority of Social-Democrats contended that directing the proletariat to economic understanding remained central because only then could political consciousness be developed. Peter Struve and Pavel Axelrod were both of this opinion. Lenin's *What Is to Be Done?* was a repudiation of that approach, and Kamenev followed Lenin into the factional struggle with Martov due to his commitment to political agitation.

It was also Lenin's bold leadership which drew Kamenev to his views. Lenin had risen through the ranks of Social-Democracy as a champion of orthodox Marxism against populism and 'economism'. Following Plekhanov's lead, Lenin demonstrated in *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* of 1899 that the populist belief that socialism could arise based on peasant values bypassing capitalism was moot because capitalism in Russia was already well established.[59] In conjunction with Plekhanov and Martov, Lenin also continually attacked Struve, S.N. Prokopovich, E.D. Kuskova, and the so-called 'economists' over their endorsement of Bernstein and his vision to forego political agitation and revolution. In total, his efforts earned

[58] Alan Shandro, '"Consciousness from without": Marxism, Lenin, and the Proletariat', *Science and Society*, 59.3, 1995, p. 285.
[59] Christopher Read, *Lenin: A Revolutionary Life*, New York: Routledge, 2005, p. 40.

him his place as a leader within Social-Democracy in his own right.[60] The impressionable Kamenev had likeminded views and quickly fell under his dominating influence.[61]

The relationship between Lenin and Kamenev was one of mutual respect. Kamenev was just twenty years old and within two years would be part of Lenin's trusted inner circle and given responsibility in running numerous Bolshevik publications. Lenin welcomed Kamenev's writing talent and desire to exchange ideas rather than to write for Iskra 'duty bound', and found him useful for his aims; Kamenev completely agreed with his focus on political action, he typically approached problems coolly and thoughtfully, spoke French fluently, had an amazing gift for oratory, rarely let emotions cloud his judgment, was not afraid to voice disagreement, and was willing to give himself to the cause as a full-time professional revolutionary. Kamenev's talents were to become so essential to Lenin that he soon was paying all his expenses out of his own personal income.[62] Despite the close relationship Lenin had with Grigori Zinoviev, Lenin would grow to value Kamenev much more.[63] When Lenin outmanoeuvred Martov at the Second Party Congress in July-August 1903 to reject the latter's call for a decentralised party, Kamenev joined Lenin's Bolsheviks (the majority) over Martov's Mensheviks (the minority) without hesitation.

The final important reason Kamenev became a Bolshevik was due to Bogdanov. A medical doctor by profession but a revolutionary and writer by vocation, the intelligent Bogdanov became part of the unofficial Bolshevik Centre together with Leonid Krasin and Lenin when the faction initially formed. He was extremely militant, promoting revolution by arguing workers

[60] Robert Service, *The Bolshevik Party in Revolution 1917-1923*, p. 21.
[61] Muzika, p. 162-170.
[62] Volkogonov, p. 76.
[63] Felix Chuev and Albert Resis, eds., *Molotov Remembers: Inside Kremlin Politics*, Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1993, p. 105.

should be armed and trained to take action when the occasion should arise.[64] As Bogdanov wholeheartedly defended Lenin's organisational views,[65] Lenin had accepted Bogdanov as a Bolshevik in hopes of gaining his left-wing followers as supporters.[66] Kamenev was less concerned with strategic alliances at the time and according to Anatoly Lunacharsky, Kamenev quickly became the 'right hand' of Bogdanov.[67] This recollection has always been rather odd considering Kamenev's affinity to Lenin. Through Lassalle though it is possible to discern why Bogdanov's views resonated so profoundly with Kamenev. In his soon to be published *Empiriomonism*, Bogdanov contended that collective consciousness could transform the real world, meaning that as the collectively thinking proletariat politically and socially awakened, the physical world would be transformed by their values. As David Rowley succinctly wrote, in Bogdanov's world view 'ideology was not a superstructure but the very foundation of the social system.'[68] His idea bore some striking similarities to Lassalle's vision of the gradual transformation of society along proletarian lines. Although Bogdanov did not reference Lassalle specifically for that work, evidence suggests Bogdanov was to some degree influenced by Lassalle. When Bogdanov began to focus less on revolution and the philosophical dimensions of Marxism later in his life and concentrated on the development of proletarian culture, he referred to Lassalle as someone with an 'aura of genius' for his concept on the 'Fourth Estate'.[69] Bogdanov was also in awe of Lassalle's ability to advance the German proletariat beyond the

[64] David G. Rowley, "Bogdanov and Lenin: Epistemology and Revolution", *Studies in East European Thought*, 48.1, 1996, p. 7.
[65] Alexander Bogdanov, *Nashi nedorazumeniya*, Geneva: Kooperativnaya Tipografia, 1904, p. 46-59.
[66] Zenovia A. Sochor, *The Bogdanov-Lenin Contraversy*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1988, p. 6.
[67] Anatoly Lunacharsky, Karl Radek, Lev Trotsky, *Siluety: politicheskie portrety*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1991, p. 299.
[68] Rowley, "Bogdanov and Lenin: Epistemology and Revolution", p. 5-6.
[69] Alexander Bogdanov, introduction, in Ferdinand Lassalle, *Izbrannye sochineniya*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1920, p. v.

consciousness of the working class in England's more advanced industrial society.[70] It is therefore rather surprising that historians studying Bogdanov, namely Zenovia A. Sochor, John Eric Marot, Avraham Yassour, and David Rowley never took Lassalle into account.[71] Bogdanov, Lassalle, and Kamenev all shared the more evolutionary contention that proletarian culture's transformation of society was a pre-requisite to revolution.

Kamenev soon became one of the faction's best promoters as his oratory proved of incredible value. In September 1903 in Tiflis and later Moscow, he was at the forefront of the party among the rank-and-file gaining support for their position. After a brief period of imprisonment in early 1904, he returned to Tiflis, where as part of the Union Caucasus Committee his fierce sparring with the Menshevik Tsereteli over party organization was so impressive it convinced a wavering Iosif Vissarionovich Djugashvili (Stalin) to join the Bolshevik faction.[72] Acknowledging his persuasive talent, Lenin personally placed him on the All-Russian Bolshevik organization to promote his desired congress to turn the tables on Martov and his Menshevik supporters.[73] Under the tutelage of both Bolshevik leaders, Kamenev was a rising star in the Bolshevik faction.

[70] Alexander Bogdanov, *O proletarskoi kul'ture 1904-1924,* Leningrad: "Kniga", 1925, p. 115.
[71] See Sochor, *The Bogdanov-Lenin Contraversy,* John Eric Marot, 'Alexander Bogdanov, Vpered, and the Role of the Intellectual in the Workers' Movement', *Russian Review,* 49.3, 1990, Avraham Yassour, 'Lenin and Bogdanov: Protagonists in the "Bolshevik Center"', *Studies in Soviet Thought*, 22.1, 1981, and Rowley, 'Bogdanov and Lenin: Epistemology and Revolution'.
[72] Leon Trotsky, *Stalin: An Appraisal of the Man and His Influence*, ed., Charles Malamuth, New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1941, p. 46 and 60.
[73] Kamenev travelled to Kursk, Orel, Kharkov, Ekaterinoslav, Voronezh, Rostov, and the Caucasus to rally party members. At a demonstration where he had appealed directly to workers he had even been wounded in violent confrontation with the police. See ibid., p. 47 and *Tretii s"ezd RSDRP aprel'-mai 1905 goda: protokoly,* Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1959, p. 74.

More Bolshevik than Lenin – More Bolshevik than Bogdanov!

With Russia in the throes of revolution, the seriousness of Kamenev's commitment to the Bolshevik faction was on full display when at the Social-Democratic Party's Third Party Congress in London April-May 1905 where he assailed both Lenin and Bogdanov for backsliding on the principles of *What Is to Be Done?*. At the centre of his condemnation of the faction's two party leaders was his contention that they were inadvertently following in the footsteps of the ideologically misplaced Mensheviks by denying the revolting proletariat its political independence. His argument is particularly poignant and is worthy of discussion because it illustrates that Kamenev was not simply a 'loyal lieutenant' of Lenin and Bogdanov or a closet Menshevik. At the congress he was more Bolshevik than Lenin or Bogdanov.

Kamenev criticized the Mensheviks, Lenin, and Bogdanov from principles outlined in *What Is to Be Done?*. In *Iskra* the Mensheviks had urged workers to cooperate with the Kadets (the Constitutional Democratic Party) and to concentrate on obtaining much needed economic gains. This was the exact position Lassalle had preached against, and what *What Is to Be Done?* considered detrimental to the cause. It was no surprise that in the absence of the Mensheviks who had boycotted the congress Kamenev backed Lenin's resolution condemning them as being 'anarchists and French syndicalists'.[74]

However, at the congress Kamenev judged that Lenin, Bogdanov, and Lunacharsky's support for armed insurrection erred in the same manner as the Mensheviks. On 15 April Lenin had announced that the events unfolding showed the 'conscious masses' in revolt and had come

[74] *Tretii s''ezd RSDRP aprel'-mai 1905 goda: protokoly,* p. 338-339.

to the conclusion that the time to prepare for revolution was at hand.[75] For a Bolshevik, this contention was problematic. True, the revolution had begun spontaneously on 9 January 1905 with workers who had brought their grievances in petition before the Tsar, but their desire for an 8-hour work day, better working conditions, and the abolition of overtime were of an *economic* orientation and had not been *political*. The Social-Democrats had neither prompted the unrest nor were at the head of the movement. It was the liberal Union of Liberation which had taken the initiate in making political demands after 9 January, not the Social-Democrats.[76] By April, the working class had still yet to show any great signs of *political* agitation. At the end of January and beginning of February there had been workers who had made political demands in the Shidlovskii Commission,[77] but Kamenev rightly pointed out that it had been an isolated event and was a microcosm in proletariat development.[78]

By and large the momentous actions of the proletariat were well within what the Bolsheviks defined as 'trade-union' consciousness. Kamenev was therefore right to declare the revolution to be of a 'pronounced bourgeois character'.[79] Of course Kamenev had no idea that in a month's time worker soviets would start to spring up across Russia, but no one did.[80] Both Lenin and Bogdanov were forcing the pace of events by wanting an unprepared proletariat to lead the struggle in revolution. In essence, if the Bolsheviks endorsed revolution they would be aiding a bourgeois revolution by supporting workers' economic grievances in the same vein as the

[75] Ibid., p. 118.
[76] Don C. Rawson, *Russian Rightists and the Revolution of 1905*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 11.
[77] On the 29 January senator N.V. Shidlovskii created the commission to hear out worker grievances in an effort to ebb the tide of revolution. Fifty workers were elected from nine industrial sectors to give their demands to State Council 16-20 February. When the workers demanded a free press, assembly, and the release of their arrested comrades, the Tsar dissolved the council.
[78] *Tretii s"ezd RSDRP aprel'-mai 1905 goda: protokoly*., p. 146.
[79] Ibid., p. 147.
[80] The first soviet would not be established until 15 May 1905.

Mensheviks. Using Bogdanov against himself, Kamenev declared that enlightening workers was the vital question, 'not whether revolution is necessary or not', complaining that they had already spent 'too much attention devoted to bombs'.[81]

Lenin tried to parry his criticism by endorsing Bogdanov's resolution to bring more workers into the party to bridge what he claimed was an intelligentsia and proletariat divide. Robert Service has contended that this manoeuvre was to placate the Mensheviks, such as A.S. Martynov and V.P. Akimov, who accused Lenin of employing conspiratorial populist methods through an organisation dominated by intellectuals.[82] Indeed, M.S. Leshchinskii explicitly attacked Lenin and Bogdanov for giving ground to the Mensheviks. However, this only partly explains his position. The damning Bolshevik criticism spearheaded by Kamenev that the party was advancing a worker movement subservient to bourgeois interests accentuates the fact that Lenin's decision to aid Bogdanov was conveniently opportune. Lenin and Bogdanov had come to the untenable position that the proletariat had miraculously become Social-Democratic overnight. Their desire to accept more workers into the party was simply a ploy to strengthen their position calling for revolution and to make the party relevant to a working class prepared for revolution without them. Kamenev called a spade a spade, charging Lenin and Bogdanov with 'demagogy'.[83] Kamenev had shown that the outrage of the working class had not been of a Social-Democratic origin, and considering that workers were demanding economic reforms, their acceptance into the faction would have favoured the Mensheviks. Kamenev's speech of course drew the fury of Lenin who interrupted him with shouts of protest, but the majority, among which

[81] *Tretii s"ezd RSDRP aprel'-mai 1905 goda: protokoly*, p 159.
[82] Robert Service, *Lenin: A Political Life, Volume I, The Strengths of contradiction*, London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1985, p.91.
[83] *Tretii s"ezd RSDRP aprel'-mai 1905 goda: protokoly*, p. 255.

were A.I. Rykov and M.M. Litvinov, agreed with Kamenev on the matter of recruiting more workers and overcame Lenin and Bogdanov's opportunism.

This entire episode with Kamenev calls into question Neil Harding's contention that Lenin was not acting as a Jacobin.[84] Certainly Lenin was optimistic the working class was outpacing Social-Democracy, but in early 1905 this was simply conjecture. Kamenev's salient critique that there was a serious lack of political independence emanating from the proletariat cannot be ignored. Lenin chose to blame 'economist' influence and the lack of Social-Democratic leadership as the source of the working class's failure to articulate their political demands, but this does not negate the fact that such demands were for the most part absent.

To argue that working class actions showed that they had surpassed Social-Democratic expectations raised serious questions as to the faction's Marxist views of the revolutions of 1848 and of the French Revolution. According to Marx and Lassalle, the bourgeoisie had used a working class in arms for their own ends and then subsequently discarded them. Both Marx and Lassalle later emphasized that the proletariat had to be kept independent of the bourgeois movement if it ever hoped to succeed. Lenin failed to explain how the situation in 1905 was playing out differently. The workers of nineteenth century France had certainly not been ahead of Social-Democracy. The Marx, Lassalle, and Bolshevik premise was that those working class movements had failed primarily due to their subservience to liberals, and Kamenev was accurately arguing in 1905 that workers in the present moment were similar and not Social-Democratic.

[84] Neil Harding, *Lenin's Political Thought: Theory and Practice in the Democratic and Socialist Revolutions*, Chicago: Haymarket Books, 1978, p. 156.

Whether Lenin had despaired or was emphatically enthusiastic about worker spontaneity is irrelevant in determining whether he acted as a Jacobin when someone in his own party, chiefly Kamenev, was essentially accusing him of it from a Bolshevik perspective. A successful revolution would have had two possible outcomes: either the bourgeois liberals would have won and then abandoned the working class, or as remote a possibility as it was, the working class would have triumphed independently. According to Bolshevik principles, in the first scenario Lenin and Bogdanov would have wrongly pushed the proletariat to follow the bourgeoisie, and in the second their small party would have most definitely acted as Jacobins in seizing power as there was a near complete lack of working class political initiative. Put simply, the working class was not ready, and Kamenev cautiously urged the dissemination of propaganda but not revolution. In confronting the party's two strong and persuasive leaders, he was, however, largely ignored, and the congress ultimately endorsed revolution.[85]

The only thing that mended the divide between Kamenev and his mentors was the surprising events which unfolded in rapid succession soon after the congress. In May predominantly self-organised 'soviets of workers' deputies' throughout Russia began to emerge making economic and political demands. Kamenev saw them as the 'highest stage' of the revolutionary movement prior to the November general strike. Then even after 17 October when the Tsar presented the country with his October Manifesto and established a Duma granting the elected body limited legislative power, a working class led uprising in Moscow shook the foundation of the country. The reservations Kamenev once held about the class character of the revolution quickly dissolved, as he felt the failed Moscow December uprising had finally proven

[85] *Tretii s"ezd RSDRP aprel'-mai 1905 goda: protokoly*, p. 451.

that the proletariat was truly becoming politically independent from the bourgeoisie.[86] Although he was not convinced that the workers in Moscow personified the whole of the proletariat, seeing what he believed was Lenin and Bogdanov's great foresight about the proletariat's growing political consciousness renewed Kamenev's devotion to the two faction leaders.

In the Wake of the Revolution of 1905 – Social-Democracy Divided

Although his discord with Lenin and Bogdanov was smoothed over, his critical view of the Mensheviks sharpened after 1905 along with the rest of the Bolshevik faction. Under Martov's direction the Mensheviks completely broke from the fundamentally Socially-Democratic idea of the 'hegemony of the proletariat' by contending that the failed Moscow Uprising was due to the lack of coordination with the bourgeoisie and that the party had to bolster bourgeois liberal efforts for revolution through legal channels rather than endorse a completely independent political line to safeguard success. Considering Social-Democracy's fundamental purpose of maintaining proletarian independence from the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks were certainly veering off course. The Bolsheviks blamed the failed uprising on the lack of Social-Democratic leadership. They were impressed by the strength of the working class and Lenin postulated that due to the proletariat's superior strength to the bourgeoisie, when revolution occurred in Russia there would be an 'uninterrupted revolution' that would in time transform the accomplished bourgeois revolution into a democratic 'dictatorship of the proletariat and

[86] Kamenev, *Mezhdu dvumya revolutsiyami*, p. 193.

peasantry'. This was not a purely proletarian regime, but one which ensured continued capitalist development under conditions advantageous for the working class.[87]

Trotsky came to a far more drastic conclusion. Unlike the Bolsheviks he had no faith in the peasantry as a revolutionary force. His theory of 'permanent revolution' maintained that in Russia the advanced proletariat would not limit itself to bourgeois democratic norms if it succeeded in toppling the Tsar and would instead erect a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' whereby Russia would serve as a springboard for further revolution in more economically developed countries. The successful proletariat from those countries would then come to Russia's aid to overcome its industrial backwardness. It has been well established that the inspiration for his idea primarily came from A.L. Parvus,[88] but what has not been considered was Lassalle's influence on Trotsky. In Trotsky's book *1905*, he justified his theory of 'permanent revolution' by advocating that 'victory is possible only along the path mapped out by Lassalle...'[89] Trotsky was taking Lassalle's defining message about the necessity of the proletariat's political independence to its maximalist conclusion, but this stripped it of its more evolutionary character. There were no secrets that Lassalle felt the peasantry an ineffectual reactionary mass, but Lassalle never proposed seizing power with a minority.

Kamenev denounced Trotsky's international gamble as a path to Jacobinism.[90] He had only recently levied the same charge at Lenin and Bogdanov, and would do so again twice in 1917 against his own party. From Marx Kamenev had acquired an internationalist connection to

[87] H. Gordon Skilling, 'Permanent or Uninterrupted Revolution: Lenin, Trotsky, and their Successors to Socialism', *Canadian Slavonic Papers,* vol. 5, 1961, P. 8.
[88] Volkogonov, p. 196.
[89] http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1905/ch04.htm (11 of 12)
[90] Lev Kamenev, 'K voprosy o roli proletariata v russkoi revolyutsii', *Nevskii sbornik,* no. 1, 1906, p. 45.

the labour movement, but he typically approached Russian socialist development on its own terms. In 1899 Lenin had dismissed Lassalle's contempt for the peasantry to ensure strategic allies in the fight against Tsarist absolutism,[91] and it is clear that he was able to convince Kamenev to do the same, but Kamenev's disdain for Trotsky's position stemmed from his idealistic contention that the state had to be representative of the collective will of the populous. The 'dictatorship of the proletariat' was not so much a political force as it was a social one. Trotsky's outline for the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' cast a working class minority as political oppressors with no socialist objectives other than to hold power. From the two, Kamenev was ideologically more in tune with Lassalle by concentrating on the ultimate object of the state. *The means determined the end*, and any oppressive Jacobin style rule would be counterproductive to advancing proletarian values of equality.

Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism'

Thus far, Kamenev's main contribution to the Bolsheviks had been his adherence to the faction's core principles of directing political agitation and in assailing Trotsky and the Mensheviks. However, his future role in the faction was defined by the centrist position he proffered to try to maintain faction unity.

The matter of the Duma granted by the October Manifesto divided the Mensheviks from the Bolsheviks, and disrupted the cohesion of the Bolshevik ranks. Their dispute with the Mensheviks was immediate. In contrast to the Bolsheviks who boycotted the first Duma as a sham, the Mensheviks felt it an advantageous opportunity to disseminate their views and aid the liberal bourgeoisie. They therefore participated in elections and gained 18 seats when the Duma

[91] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 4, p. 172.

opened on 10 May 1906. After the government dissolved the First Duma on 8 July for its unruly nature, Lenin argued that the Bolsheviks should cut their losses and turn their eyes to the Duma as an avenue to promote their views and regain their strength. Bogdanov argued the opposite and demanded the faction boycott the Second Duma as they had done the first. Further complicating matters was that there were two sub-groups, the '*otzovists*', and the 'ultimatists', the former meaning 'recallists' for their desire to remove the party's delegates from the Duma should they disobey the Central Committee, and the 'ultimatists' demanded that any Social-Democrat in the Duma strictly adhere to the Central Committee or resign.[92] Three groups thus supported some form of participation, but Bogdanov's majority group, which included Maxim Gorky, Krasin, G.A. Alexinsky, and Lunacharsky, pressed to retain the boycott so the party could focus on promoting revolution. In order to turn the tables on Bogdanov since Lenin was in the minority, he shrewdly supported a united Menshevik and Bolshevik Congress to successfully outvote the Bogdanov group.[93]

Lenin's unabashed intrigues continued. To ensure the continuation of his policies, during the May 1907 Fifth Party Congress Lenin expanded the unofficial Bolshevik Centre from 3 members to 15 in preparation for a widening conflict with the Mensheviks. Many of Lenin's supporters, notably Kamenev, Zinoviev, V.P. Nogin, M.N. Pokrovskii, Rykov, I.A. Teodorovich, and V.K. Taratuta joined. As Lenin had hoped, expanding its composition now removed Bogdanov and Krasin's 2 to 1 majority over Lenin.[94] However, only a month after Lenin's position was secure, on 1 June 1907 the Prime Minister Peter Stolypin charged Social-Democrat

[92] Yassour, p. 1.
[93] Service, *Lenin: A Political Life,Volume I,* p. 153-155.
[94] B.I. Nikolaevskii, 'K istorii 'Bol'shevistskogo tsentra', *Voprosy istorii*, no. 7, July, 2010, p. 13.

Duma deputies with plotting insurrection and had them arrested. With the Tsar's acceptance Stolypin then rigged the electoral laws so that the Third Duma would have more seats allocated to the nobility and the landowners.

The news of the Third Duma's blatant manipulation deepened the Bolshevik divide and Kamenev proposed an alternative boycott scheme to unite the party. Surprisingly, historians have given his position little attention. In the vast majority of literature discussing the importance of the Duma debate from authors such as Robert V. Daniels, Zenovia A. Sochor, Neil Harding, and others, there is no mention of Kamenev's opposition position whatsoever. Alfred Levin mentioned Kamenev's stance, but he failed to make a distinction between Kamenev and Bogdanov's differing positions.[95] Levin adequately conveyed Bogdanov's desire for a boycott as a tactic to bolster revolutionary forces, but he completely missed the point that Kamenev was attempting to find the 'middle way' to prevent a Lenin and Bogdanov split.[96]

To Lenin, a boycott was a 'declaration of war' and useful only in times of increasing upheaval. In Kamenev's June 1907 article, 'About the boycott of the Third Duma', Kamenev did not reject Lenin's reasoning, but argued they could better serve Social-Democracy by boycotting the Duma for a different reason other than the Duma's legitimacy. Kamenev was alarmed that the disbandment of the Second Duma had been met with political 'passivity' among the masses and the crux of his proposal was that the faction should raise political awareness by boycotting the new 'police order to the ballot box' to re-elect new deputies to a Third Duma rather than the Duma itself. If the party engaged workers in protest, resisting the 'police order' would require

[95] Alfred Levin, *The Third Duma: Election and Profile,* Hamden: The Shoe String Press, Inc., 1973, p. 48.
[96] Lev Kamenev, 'Pis'mo Bogdanovu', *Pod Znamenem Marksizma*, 9-10, 1932, p. 202.

effort and would show the proletariat and peasantry that there were political consequences to the Social-Democrat arrests.[97]

Kamenev hoped that active demonstrations would 'undermine trust in the Duma' as worker protest would cause the peasantry to question the government's position. Then when policies in the Duma failed to meet peasant expectations, the party could point out its flaws and offer an alternative (this was the Bolshevik strategy of 1917!). Lenin, Kamenev hoped, would see that trying to gain ground in the Duma could have an adverse effect. He pointed out that if the Bolsheviks entered the Duma as a significant minority, there might be times they would have to side with the Kadets against the Octobrists. That would tarnish their image and would ideologically muddy their message of class warfare. Trying to win him round, Kamenev used Lenin against himself, quoting from him that he had always said that Social-Democrats had to stand at the front of the movement 'resolute' and engage in the 'most direct form of struggle'.[98] Challenging the Duma arrests was the 'most direct form of struggle' and would spread Social-Democracy unadulterated to the end Lenin desired.

The arrest of their Duma deputies was despised by all Bolsheviks, and by urging the party protest the 'police order to the ballot box' rather than the Duma, he had forged a centrist position to safeguard unity. A boycott would have given Bogdanov the action he desired, but it would have deprived him the substance of his vision to retain the militancy of the proletariat for revolution. Had Kamenev's position been accepted, the heated arguments between Bogdanov, Lenin, the '*otzovists*', and the 'ultimatists' would have greatly diminished because Kamenev's

[97] Lev Kamenev, 'Za boikot' in *O boikot tret'ei dumy,* Moscow: Tipografiya Gorizontova, 1907, p. 27.
[98] Ibid., p. 32.

platform would have alleviated the factional divide among the Bolsheviks by removing the debate about Duma *participation* altogether by redirecting agitation to protest the 'police order'.

This marked the beginning of Kamenev's most important contribution to the party. In a party where rigid views were the norm, his dialogism produced a centrist position formulated on the basis of compromise. Kamenev had in essence applied Lassalle's organizing strategy for the splintered working class to the party itself, searching for unifying directives to maintain cohesion. Even though it was the first time he tried to hold a centrist position to unify the faction, it would certainly not be the last, and it is therefore this dissertation's endeavour to show how Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' influenced his policies, decisions, and the Bolsheviks.

Kamenev's first attempt at a centrist policy failed miserably. Lenin won the Duma debate by use of the Mensheviks and despite his tolerance of Kamenev's dissenting view, Lenin was certainly not going to let his political hold over the faction slip away. Lenin cared significantly more about his ideas dominating the party line than about conciliation. Furthermore, the party congress had already resolved the matter of Duma participation and few were willing to re-open the debate for something that would at most delay participation. Kamenev's position garnered dismal support. Despairing that he could not mend the faction divide he appealed to Bogdanov on 26 November 1908 in a letter, pleading for Lenin and Bogdanov to resolve their differences.[99]

Kamenev had a difficult choice. His 'middle way' had failed and he had to choose a side. To Bogdanov he admitted that although he was ready to support Lenin politically, he theoretically pledged himself to him.[100] This shows that Kamenev's backing of Lenin was not

[99] Lev Kamenev, 'Pis'mo Bogdanovu', p. 202.
[100] Ibid., p. 202-203.

unconditional and challenges the historical narrative that Kamenev was Lenin's simple 'lieutenant'. His statement also invites deeper exploration. Zenovia A. Sochor has argued that Lenin's focus on preparing the working class for political agitation and revolution was at odds with Bogdanov's belief that a cultural awakening among the proletariat was a pre-requisite to revolutionary action.[101] In this she relies on Lenin's adherence to Marx's contention that the working class cultivates consciousness and culture during and after revolution. John Eric Marot has also made this contention.[102]

Were these explanations accepted, it would mean that Kamenev occupied a contradictory position, but their premise is based on Marx and they never took Lassalle into consideration. Lassalle saw political agitation as the necessary means to create working class collective identity, meaning that culture and political consciousness could develop simultaneously outside of an open revolutionary struggle. Lassalle had never believed revolution could be forced, and neither did Kamenev.[103] Not only had Kamenev opposed the 1905 Revolution for a lack of a developed and politically independent working class consciousness, but he would maintain a similar position on revolution in 1917. Kamenev explicitly stated in 1910 that '…such a tactic of artificially forcing events has never been a tactic of the proletariat in the revolution.'[104] It was not the revolutionary determination of Lenin's Marxism that appealed to Kamenev, it was that he believed the political tactics Lenin employed would promote Social-Democratic ideals and develop the proletariat better than Bogdanov's militant path. Kamenev highly valued the state as the vehicle for socialist

[101] Sochor, p. 31-32.
[102] See Marot, p. 260-261.
[103] Whilst circumstantial evidence suggests that Lassalle may have thought a revolution could be forced, his critic Eduard Bernstein thought the evidence unsound and uncharacteristic of his true position. See Bernstein, chapter 5.
[104] Kamenev, *Mezhdu dvumya revolutsiyami*, p. 592.

transformation, and Lenin's explanation that the 'otzovists' were leading workers to see no value in state institutions was paramount in his decision to side with Lenin.[105]

The Expulsion of Bogdanov

Whilst Sochor is right in emphasizing that Lenin's Marxist influence had deficiencies in assessing how exactly to develop proletariat culture and that this divided Lenin and Bogdanov, Kamenev shows that the views of both of the Bolshevik faction leaders could have been synthesized through a Lassallean paradigm. That said, there needs to be an explanation as to why Kamenev's long-standing relations with Bogdanov soon deteriorated to the point where together with Lenin and Zinoviev he broadsided Bogdanov to expel him from the faction at the 21-26 June 1909 Meeting of the Expanded Editorial Board of *Proletarii*.

The primary reason Kamenev moved against Bogdanov was due to his follower, Lunacharsky, who in one of the Bolshevik's legal journals, *Literaturnyi Raspad*, praised socialism as a religious movement. Violating the agreement Bogdanov and Lenin had made abroad about not quarrelling on philosophical questions,[106] Kamenev argued in his 12 February 1909 *Proletarii* article 'Not on the Path' that 'the mistake of Lunacharsky is the fact that in essence he offers a different way in attracting the working class to the banner of scientific socialism other than from an economic process'.[107] His denunciation of Lunacharsky as going beyond the limits of Marxism was a position easily defended, and his pointed attack that Marxism was supposed to 'free humanity from any kind of oppression, including from the

[105] Ibid., p. 276-277.
[106] Yu.G. Fel'shtinskii, ed., 'K istorii 'V preddverii polnogo raskola. Protivorechiya i konflikty v rossiiskoi sotsial-demokratii 1908-1912 gg.', *Voprosy istorii*, no. 9, September, 2010, p. 17.
[107] Kamenev, *Mezhdu dvumya revolutsiyami*, p. 293.

oppression of religious fetishes,'[108] was undeniably accurate. Marx had never contended that communism was akin to religion, and Kamenev rightfully felt that trying to attract peasants and workers to the revolutionary movement through 'god-building', by way of fashioning socialism as something spiritual in nature, was alien to Social-Democracy.[109]

Even though Lunacharsky recalled many years later that Kamenev had simply done Lenin's bidding,[110] this was not true.[111] Kamenev had just four years earlier been the 'right hand' of Bogdanov and his rupture with Bogdanov confirms what Karl G. Ballestem and Marot have argued concerning Lenin's break with Bogdanov when Lenin published *Materialism and Emperio-criticism* a month later, that the divide between Bogdanov and Lenin had in fact been a sincere philosophical dispute and was not simply the spilling over of politics into the philosophical realm.[112] Marot has contended that Lenin and Bogdanov's political and philosophical disagreements were separate affairs, but Kamenev is proof that their conflict forced their followers to make choices that pitted theoretical beliefs directly against political decisions. Kamenev explicitly told Bogdanov that philosophical disagreements were determining politics.[113] Similar to Lenin's entrenched unwillingness to accept Bogdanov's *Empirio-monism*, Kamenev wanted no part in Lunacharsky's 'religious atheism'. It was therefore from these disagreements Kamenev officially surrendered on 4 April 1909 to Lenin's political line on Duma

[108] Ibid., p. 296.
[109] Ibid., p. 295.
[110] Lunacharsky, Radek, Trotksky, p. 300-301.
[111] Later evidence in Kamenev's writings confirms his disdain for Lunacharsky's views. Writing about Lunacharsky in 1934, Kamenev made sure to acknowledge Lunacharsky's 'deviation'. Further, in his personal notes in 1928 Kamenev recalled Bogdanov's endorsement of non-scientific socialism as detrimental to Bolshevism. It suffices to say that with this statement not being directed to any audience but to posterity, it revealed his true convictions. See Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI) 323/1/65/1-10 and 323/2/50/50.
[112] See Marot, p. 247-248, and Karl G. Ballestrem, 'Lenin and Bogdanov', *Studies in Soviet Thought*, 9.4, 1969.
[113] Kamenev, 'Pis'mo Bogdanovu', *Pod Znamenem Marksizma*, p. 203.

participation.[114] Now a strong political ally, in Geneva Lenin invited him to work together with him and Zinoviev on *Proletarii* and to make Kamenev chair of the International Socialist Bureau.[115] Seeing his former student's turn, Bogdanov called Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Lenin the 'secret anti-boycott centre'.[116]

The June 1909 Meeting of the Expanded Editorial Board of *Proletarii* proved that although Kamenev had deep misgivings about Lunacharsky, and by association, Bogdanov, he had great ambivalence about formally splitting with Bogdanov. As the *Proletarii* editorial board was in itself an extension of the Bolshevik Centre, Lenin's supporters significantly outnumbered Bogdanov's at the meeting.[117] Zinoviev and Kamenev again raised the issue of Bogdanov defending 'otzovists', illustrating that when Social-Democrat Duma deputies visited worker clubs in St. Petersburg, 'otzovists' were speaking against them alongside syndicalists.[118] The Bolsheviks were not against central government, and Zinoviev feared that retaining 'otzovists' would allow anarchist influences to creep into the faction.[119] Kamenev concurred, declaring that the 'embryo of anarchism…needs to be amputated.'[120] Their complaints were sincere. A socialist republic could not be established by pseudo-anarchists.

[114] Kamenev, *Mezhdu dvumya revolutsiyami*, p. 276-277.
[115] Muzika, p. 162-170.
[116] Nikolaevskii, 'K istorii 'Bol'shevistskogo tsentra', p. 24.
[117] There were eleven people at the meeting, eight of whom were members of the Bolshevik Centre, and three were from the localities. Bogdanov's only real ally at the meeting was one of the December Moscow Uprising organizers, V.L. Shantser.
[118] Geoffrey Swain, ed., *Protokoly Soveshchaniya Rasshirennoi Redaktsii "Proletariya" Iyun' 1909,* London: Kraus International Publications, 1982, p. 28.
[119] Ibid., p. 18.
[120] Ibid., p. 32.

In vain Bogdanov protested his expulsion from the editorial board, citing that as he was elected by a congress only it had the right to remove him.[121] Kamenev did not condemn Bogdanov for being outside the faction, or declare that his views were incompatible with the party. Instead he argued that Bogdanov could not 'organize a faction within a faction'.[122] The thrust of Kamenev's attack was against Lunacharsky, and that his 'religious atheism' and its aspiration to create a 'complete merger of the socialist proletariat and the peasantry' was a complete abrogation of the 'hegemony of the proletariat'.[123] There remained within him an uncertainty as to how to deal with Bogdanov's group, and together with M.P. Tomskii and his former 1905 ally Rykov, Kamenev refused to support his own article attacking Lunacharsky to become party policy.[124] Voted as party doctrine anyway, Lenin declared that '"Bolshevism" must now become strictly Marxist.'[125] The majority, with only two abstentions, voted to eject Bogdanov and Lunacharsky from the editorial board, and in essence, the faction.

The *Proletarii* episode illustrates the pressure both Lenin and Bogdanov brought to bear on their supporters to enact the split. Kamenev's November plea to Bogdanov had in fact been a response to a letter in which Bogdanov had pressed him for support against Lenin.[126] With his 1907 'middle way' entirely ignored, Kamenev was forced to side with Lenin for his politics out of concern for Lunacharsky and his 'un-Marxist' views emanating from the Bogdanov camp.[127]

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[121] Ibid.. 32.
[122] Ibid., p. 57.
[123] Ibid., p. 39-40.
[124] P. Yudin, 'Predislovie k pis'mo L.B. Kameneva – A.A. Bogdanovu', *Pod Znamenem Marksizma*, 9-10, 1932, p. 201.
[125] Swain, *Protokoly Soveshchaniya Rasshirennoi Redaktsii "Proletariya" Iyun' 1909,* p. 27.
[126] RGASPI 323/2/154/57.
[127] After the official factional split Bogdanov, Maxim Gorky, and his brother-in-law Lunacharsky set up a Bogdanov-minded Bolshevik school on the Isle of Capri on 5 August 1909 to educate workers and prepare them for revolution. Lenin's Bolsheviks did the same in Longjumeau, near Paris, where Kamenev lectured on party history

Two Parties

Whatever 'middle way' Kamenev had tried to find between Lenin and Bogdanov, his search for compromise only briefly extended to the Mensheviks in the period leading up to the First World War. Numerous members of the Menshevik faction had become weary of difficult and dangerous underground work and were advocating Social-Democratic efforts focus on affecting change through legal channels. Lenin and the Bolsheviks branded them 'liquidators', and at the 21-27 December 1908 Fifth Party Conference condemned them as 'anti-party' agitators. Even Plekhanov seemed a potential ally to root them out. While at first Bolshevik animosity for party 'liquidators' and Menshevik disdain for 'boycottists' paved the way for possible rapprochement as both factions agreed to expel the equally problematic groups from the party and suspend both their faction newspapers *Proletarii* and *Golos Sotsial-Demokrata* respectively, cooperation through Trotsky's Vienna *Pravda* quickly fell apart and in 1912 party unity ceased with a definitive Bolshevik and Menshevik split.

Kamenev's role in trying to bring the ideologically sparring factions together was decided during the expanded editorial board meeting of *Proletarii* on 13 June 1909, where in search of funds and support the board accepted Kamenev's proposal for him to negotiate with Trotsky in hopes of having a Bolshevik enter *Pravda's* editorial board. The thought was that they could not bring Trotsky to the Bolsheviks, Trotsky would be willing to toe the line of the Bolshevik dominated Central Committee.[128] The arrogant and inflexible Trotsky wrecked the promising possibility. Despite his maintaining a centrist position, Trotsky refused to uphold the decision of

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and the various factions. By 1911 squabbles had reached such a height within Bogdanov's group that it splintered and forced the closing of their school. See Muzika, p. 162-170.

[128] Swain, *Protokoly Soveshchaniya Rasshirennoi Redaktsii "Proletariya" Iyun' 1909,* p. 111-112.

the joint Bolshevik and Menshevik Central Committee. On 25 February 1910 Trotsky published 'A letter from *Pravda* to thinking Workers' where instead of challenging the party 'liquidators' as the central committee dictated, he asked for uncompromising unity. Confronted with Trotsky's stubbornness Kamenev refused to continue to work with him. On 6 April Lenin urged Kamenev to understand that 'genuine ideological rapprochement' with Plekhanov and building the 'party core' was all that was important, and that he should not resign,[129] but Kamenev could not work with unyielding opponents like Trotsky who continued to run *Pravda* as if Kamenev was not even there.

This episode illustrates one of Kamenev's failings, for what he disdained about Trotsky he overlooked in his allies. Both Lenin and Zinoviev had characteristics completely at variance with Kamenev's calm, moderate, honest, and accommodating nature. Lenin could be obstinate, divisive, and at times unforgiving. One need only look to Lenin's attack on Bogdanov in *Materialism and Emperio-criticism* to see how he ruthlessly treated his opponents. Zinoviev was dogmatic, ambitious, and self-absorbed. What drew Kamenev to Lenin and Zinoviev was their like-minded ideas, and for that he consciously overlooked Lenin's rather ruthless handling of adversaries. That was why he and Zinoviev became fast friends and why their friendship lasted the rest of their lives. Zinoviev may have had a character most found unpleasant, but his willingness to accept and often follow Kamenev's lead kept the two bound together by both friendship and common ideological understanding.

The difference between Kamenev and Lenin's opposition to the Mensheviks was one of degree, but it was hardly subtle. Lenin alluded to the 'liquidators' as being 'enemies of Social-

[129] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 47, p. 244-245.

Democracy.'[130] Kamenev had his own apprehension of the Mensheviks, but he had yet to attack them with such ideologically damning words. It was not until August 1911 that Kamenev wrote something with heated vitriol against them, but that was only because Lenin forced his will upon him and heavy-handedly supervised him to write *Two Parties* in an effort to enact a split between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks. More a theoretical discussion than an attack, Kamenev's usual prose was lengthy and passive. In comparison, Lenin's language was abrasive, terse, divisive, and bold, and he desired the same from Kamenev. In a letter to Zinoviev on 27 August 1909 concerning one of Kamenev's articles,[131] Lenin complained that Kamenev 'rambles' and 'does not get to the heart of the matter'.[132] Indeed, with such a work needing belligerent discourse to force a divide, Lenin's wife Nadezhda Krupskaya recalled how Lenin 'expounded his views' to Kamenev for *Two Parties* outside Longjumeau.[133] Lenin instructed Kamenev to ensure that in *Two Parties* he stressed that it was the 'liquidators' that had broken from the party, not the Bolsheviks.[134] Therefore, through Kamenev's words Lenin struck at the Mensheviks, calling them 'enemies', 'renegades of the revolution', 'anti-revolutionary', and even 'traitors', and explained how the Mensheviks were trying to transform the party to serve liberal ends.[135]

Lenin's influence is rather obvious, as Kamenev's younger brother Alexander had been a Menshevik until his untimely death from typhus in 1907. They had exchanged ideas by letter and despite their differences their relations had remained cordial.[136] More significantly, Kamenev's

[130] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 19, p. 203 and 209.
[131] The article of discussion was Kamenev's 'The liquidation of the hegemony of the Proletariat in the Menshevik history of the Russian Revolution'.
[132] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 47, p. 193.
[133] N.K. Krupskaya, *Reminiscences of Lenin*, Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1959, p. 224.
[134] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 48, p. 36.
[135] Kamenev, *Mezhdu dvumya revolutsiyami*, p. 499.
[136] Merridale, 'The Making of a Moderate Bolshevik', p. 28-29.

wife was a Menshevik![137] He had married Olga Davidovna Bronstein after seeing her at a meeting of the Jewish Bund in 1903. To compound matters, she was the beloved sister of the Menshevik leaning Trotsky, and thus Kamenev's ties to the Mensheviks were a family affair. He did not consider them 'enemies'. The same year Kamenev wrote *Two Parties* he had also written articles for *Zvezda*, independent of Lenin, and in those writings the greatest charge he levelled at his opponents was that the 'Mensheviks and SRs are liquidating elements of socialism in their policy' by supporting the liberal bourgeoisie.[138] Martov, '*in principle*', Kamenev wrote, 'is a revolutionary Marxist, but in practice he is an opportunist.'[139] At the Prague Sixth Party Conference on 5-7 January 1912 Kamenev supported the official Bolshevik and Menshevik split into two separate parties but he did not consider them enemies or non-socialists.

Conclusion

Despite the near complete absence of his influence in the historical literature on Lenin and the Bolsheviks, it is clear that Ferdinand Lassalle had a decisive impact on Kamenev's early development and was quite influential in the development of early Bolshevism. Lenin's understanding of the proletariat's inability to overcome 'trade-union' consciousness and his desire for the working class to maintain its political independence originated from Lassalle and were essential in formulating *What Is to Be Done?*. Further, Lassalle's views on proletarian culture and the 'Fourth Estate' are so strikingly similar to Bogdanov's that his influence cannot be ignored. It is therefore no surprise that Kamenev, whose socialist awakening was exclusively due to Lassalle, gravitated to the Bolsheviks immediately. His opposition to the Mensheviks,

[137] Frederick Corney, 'Trotskii and the Vienna *Pravda*, 1908-1912', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 27.3, 1985, p. 262.
[138] Kamenev, *Mezhdu dvumya revolutsiyami*, p. 355.
[139] Ibid., p. 535.

Trotsky, Bogdanov, and liberals was therefore not out of some toady adoration for Lenin, but was born of his own values and ideological convictions. He took both Lenin and Bogdanov to task over failing to uphold their own faction's principles at the outset of the 1905 Revolution, challenged the Mensheviks over their endorsement of liberal bourgeois cooperation, and ended his relationship with Bogdanov due to his own experiences and theoretical views.

Although Kamenev created no solid theoretical models of his own, he came to his own position by synthesizing the two main Bolshevik currents headed by Lenin and Bogdanov through a Lassallean worldview, and this set the foundation for his 'Bolshevik Centrism'. Kamenev sought to amalgamate views by focusing on points of unity. His first centrist position may have fallen flat over the Third Duma boycott, but his dialogism continued. With the Mensheviks, for example, he invited them to debate, rather than like Lenin, to assault them with odious language to drive them away. Kamenev wanted to have an independent party because he was genuinely concerned with the Menshevik's continual aspirations to tail a weak liberal bourgeois leadership, but he considered them allies and not enemies in the cause for socialism. Kamenev's early shortcoming was in his succumbing to pressure. Trusting Lenin's guidance and politics after his rupture with Bogdanov over Lunacharsky's 'religious atheism', for a brief time he became the mouthpiece of Lenin in writing *Two Parties* to enact a split with the Mensheviks. He did not consider political opponents to be enemies, yet he had allowed Lenin to force his hand.

Kamenev had a meteoric rise through the Bolshevik ranks, but his influence in the leadership prior to 1914 was rather mild. The 'Bolshevik Centrism' that emerged was a near paradox within the Bolshevik faction at the time. He had been unable to keep Bogdanov and

Lenin together or to persuade Trotsky. The opposing views between Bogdanov and Lenin forged rigid ideological battle lines and neither side had wished to concede, but the episode reveals that Kamenev was not the unconditional 'follower' of Lenin historians have hitherto described. The choice between Bogdanov and Lenin had been an extraordinarily difficult one. Kamenev had attempted to hold the faction together and in doing so set the precedent for future returns to his 'Bolshevik Centrism'.

CHAPTER 2

The outbreak of the Great War on 2 August 1914 drastically changed the political landscape between socialists. Socialists of the Second International and those that attended the Basel Conference had agreed that if war erupted the primary task of all socialists was to confront the event with agitation for a proletariat revolution. Their pledges rang hollow and socialists divided when the war started. Some endorsed war credits for their governments, some urged peace, some supported the war effort so long as it was to defend their country's borders and others such as the Bolsheviks advocated revolution to halt the war. Russia's losses and economic troubles prompted a war-weary populous to overthrow the Tsar in February of 1917. Socialists in Russia marked it as the victory of the bourgeois revolution. Workers and peasants led by Mensheviks established the Petrograd Soviet which rivalled the Kadet and Octobrist Provisional Government. Mensheviks and Bolsheviks began to openly discuss unity. Lenin expedited his passage through Germany to shape events in Petrograd and presented his *April Theses* which derailed cooperation and defined the party's long-term objectives to take power. Kamenev was the leading Bolshevik critic against Lenin's proposals. The origins and theoretical basis for his disagreement and the alternative path Kamenev set before the party is the focus of this chapter.

The Great War – Understanding Events

Neil Harding has aptly demonstrated that from the outset of war in 1914, Lenin underwent a dramatic shift in his theoretical orientation. Best expressed in his 1916 *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin argued that the world was witnessing the final stage of capitalism, as capitalist countries directed all aspects of their economy, culture, and politics for

war to control foreign markets. With state and military operations intertwined with monopolistic corporations, Lenin was convinced that this proved the ineffectiveness of parliamentary reforms to legislate socialism into being and predicted that the proletariat would soon engage in revolutionary civil war to halt the war to bring down their capitalist oppressors.[140] This vision was similar to even what some establishment figures such as Russia's former Minister of Internal Affairs Peter Durnovo believed, that a war would rouse revolutionary extremism and topple the Russian government.[141]

The ideological divergence over Russia's development between Lenin and Kamenev first emerged when Lenin advocated 'defeatism', a position whereby he encouraged Social-Democrats to work to hasten Russia's downfall so that the proletariat could prepare for civil war. Russia was not as economically or industrially advanced as Europe, nor was its proletariat as large or developed. Lenin therefore did not believe revolution was going to take place first in Russia and spread outwards, but with cold practicality understood that the first country's proletariat to instigate revolutionary civil war was bound to result in that country's immediate defeat. A simultaneous working class uprising spanning the whole of Europe was an unrealistic expectation. He therefore had no objection to using Russia's defeat to spark the chain of revolution.[142]

Kamenev completely rejected the idea of 'defeatism' on the grounds that if the proletariat was not developed enough to overthrow the Tsar, logically it was in no better position to

[140] Neil Harding, *Leninism*, London: Macmillion Press LTD, 1996, p. 78.
[141] Dominic Lieven, *The End of Tsarist Russia: The March to World War I and the Revolution,* New York: Penguin Random House LLC, 2015, Kindle file, chapter six.
[142] Lenin, *PSS,* vol. 26, p. 6. See also Lenin, *PSS,* vol. 30, p. 15.

overcome the German Kaiser.[143] Other leading Bolsheviks shared Kamenev's sentiment, including Nikolai Bukharin, Alexandra Kollontai, and Alexander Shlyapnikov, and together they prevented Lenin's position from becoming official Bolshevik policy.[144]

It is important to delineate Kamenev's theoretical reasons for disagreeing with Lenin in order to understand how he arrived at his February 1917 position which pitted him against Lenin. The essence of his resistance to 'defeatism' was that the Russian proletariat was impossibly overwhelmed by both feudal rulers and bourgeois capitalists. Kamenev contended that in Russia the Great War had brought about an atypical bourgeois-feudal union which varied greatly from its European counterparts, and although part of the explanation for his reasoning can be found in his 1916 *About A.I. Herzen and N.G. Chernyshevskii*, the origins of his view can be traced to his dispute with Peter Struve concerning the latter's interpretation of Lassalle. As an ex-Marxist turned liberal, Struve had evoked the name of Lassalle in 1900 to demonstrate how the Russian government could use religion as a common bond to unite state and society.[145] Lassalle had written that one mission of the state was to transform society by being a 'moral' authority, where governing workers would set the enlightening example to convert opponents. Struve wanted to apply Lassalle's transforming mission to the Tsarist Russian state, maintaining that a Bismarkian Stolypin combined with a popular belief in a 'Great Russia' could become a 'religious idea able to soften the corners of radicalism, its rigidness and severity'.[146] This adoption of Lassalle dramatically perverted Lassalle's original intent. Lassalle had never desired the state to be

[143] Although his article against defeatism appeared in *Pravda* much later, they remained unaltered from 1915. See *Pravda*. March 15, 1917, p. 1.
[144] R. Craig Nation, *War on War: Lenin, the Zimmerwald Left, and the Origins of Communist Internationalism*, USA: Duke University Press, 1989, p. 36.
[145] Kamenev, *Mezhdu dvumya revolutsiyami*, p. 362-363.
[146] Ibid., p. 362-364.

morally coercive and directed from above. The state was supposed to express ingrained institutional values. In *About A.I. Herzen and N.G. Chernyshevskii*, Kamenev attributed Struve's quasi-religious messianiac ideas to slavophilism and 'not from the democratic heritage of the Russian 'enlightened philosophers' such as Herzen, Chernyshevskii, and Dobrolyubov.'[147]

Kamenev returned to Struve's ideas to understand Russia's participation in the war. In it he wrote that these bourgeois liberals had twisted Herzen and Chernyshevskii's messianic vision to socially transform Russia by fusing liberalism with feudalism in a 'messianic fever' of 'intense hatred' against Herzen and Chernyshevskii's socialist ideals.[148] Russian liberals did not have a period of self-actualization as their counterparts in eighteenth century France or in Cromwell's England, so with the idea of liberation having already been superseded by an imperialistic agenda, Russia's nascent bourgeois were in essence skipping their development of democracy, forging an unnatural alliance with feudal pre-capitalist remnants of a bygone era and creating a 'philosophy of reactionary imperialism'.[149] Thus Slavophil's had accepted European bourgeois individualism and infused it with Russian Orthodoxy 'to not only stray from western beginnings, but to oppose the West, subdue it, give it their "new word", and rebuild it according to their nature.'[150] Inheriting their western counterparts' capitalist 'imperialism' without their experience of democracy had resulted in the liberals' merger with Russian messianism and the Russian autocracy in favour of war.

Taking his analysis to its conclusion, it is clear why Kamenev opposed Lenin. With a bourgeoisie unwilling to overthrow absolutism, he had little hope that the proletariat was

[147] Lev Kamenev, *Ob A.I. Herzen' i N.G. Chernyshevskii*, Petrograd: Zhizn' i znanie, 1916, p. 11.
[148] Ibid., p. 13.
[149] Ibid., 17.
[150] Ibid., p. 14.

developed enough to succeed in overcoming both the influences and power of the bourgeoisie and the remnants of feudalism. Russia could therefore not lead in a proletariat revolutionary civil war, but could unite with a revolutionary movement emanating from the West to gain strength.

In general, Kamenev's understanding of events did not exactly place him at odds with Lenin. He accepted his proposal for civil war and his analysis that the West was in its final stages of capitalist development. His differences were on tactics in regards to Russia. In his mind the bourgeois-feudal alliance was going to break as Russian losses increased, but that had to occur of its own accord. Kamenev remained committed to Russia erecting some form of a democratic republic.[151]

'There is no middle way'

Two days after World War I began socialist parties in Germany and France voted for their countries respective war loans, violating their agreement with the Second International's promise to exploit war-time conditions to hasten the overthrow of capitalism. This marked Lenin's complete animus against all other international socialist parties. Although he had shown his ideological rigidity in forcing a split with Bogdanov and the Mensheviks prior to August 1914, the scale of his inflexibility dramatically increased. R. Craig Nation has remarked that Lenin was 'uniquely severe' to his opponents.[152] As Jacob W. Kipp has insightfully argued, Lenin turned to Clausewitz and adopted the general's view that war was an extension of politics.[153] Everything

[151] Nation, p. 38.
[152] Ibid., p. 33.
[153] Jacob W. Kipp, 'Lenin and Clausewitz: The Militarization of Marxism, 1914-1921', *Military Affairs,* 49.4, 1985, p. 186.

had to be done in preparation for revolution and everyone against that idea, wavering, or *even neutral*, was a detriment to the cause and had to be overcome.

Relatively unchallenged at the head of the Bolsheviks Lenin's monological discourse fully matured. Far less tolerant than he was before 1914, he insisted that all socialists, including his fellow Bolsheviks, accept his views with little to no discussion. His platform was not only a competing idea; to him it was the *only* legitimate one. So focused he was on *his* ideas surrounding socialism that he venomously attacked fellow socialists as if they were equal to the capitalist governments which had started the war. A brief look at his discourse will help illustrate the point.

With Lenin's internalization of Clausewitz, his words became the instrument with which to wage war against his adversaries. Lenin wrote that the German Social-Democratic Party's vote for the war loan was a 'direct betrayal of socialism,' and branded all socialists voting for such war credits as 'traitors'. He demanded that socialists carry out 'a ruthless struggle against the chauvinism and "patriotism" of the philistines and bourgeoisie of all countries without exception.'[154] Although Lenin's tone grew milder as time passed, often exchanging the word 'traitor' for 'social-chauvinist', his language remained hostile. In November of 1914, he wrote that 'the first and foremost task of Social-Democrats in every country must be to fight that country's chauvinism.'[155] This was a revision of his priorities. The *primary task* was *not* preparing for revolutionary civil war, but to battle against other socialists. In December 1916 he wrote that any kind of compromise was impossible, maintaining his previous conviction that

[154] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 26, p. 6.
[155] Ibid., p. 21.

unity could only be achieved by expelling the 'social-chauvinists' from socialism.[156] After the failure of the 5-8 September 1915 Zimmerwald Conference to establish a new international he was even more resolute, proclaiming that 'true internationalism' was a call 'demanding a struggle against the social-patriots *above all else* in your own country!'[157]

Lenin even condemned those who had not even voted for war loans. Inside Russia the Menshevik and Bolshevik Duma deputies remained united in opposing war credits, but Lenin still polarized politics by challenging 'social-chauvinists' like Plekhanov, noting in 1914 that if he and other 'social chauvinists' in Russia had not yet betrayed internationalism in deed, Lenin believed they would soon prove traitors against socialism's cause.[158]

It was not long before Lenin militarized his discourse, leaving no room for compromise. He despised pacifists, and the socialists supporting their governments' stance on the war were labelled 'turncoats' and Lenin charged them with 'desertion' for abandoning their fellow socialists. By using such war-time words as 'desertion' and 'turncoat', his language left no doubt that he sought total capitulation. Even those socialists demanding peace were suspect. To Lenin the choice was clear, 'revolutionary struggle or servility to imperialism', declaring that 'there is no middle way'.[159]

Although shocked by the failure of the socialist internationalist community to uphold the November 1912 Basle Congress' decision to immediately foment revolution in the face of war, Kamenev refused to demonise his opponents and instead focused on finding common ground, the

[156] Ibid., p. 188-189.
[157] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 30, p. 305.
[158] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 26, p. 110.
[159] Ibid., p. 306.

hallmark of his 'Bolshevik Centrism'. In January of 1914 Lenin and Kamenev had agreed that Kamenev was to go to Russia to better organize the party's *Pravda* newspaper and their Duma group, where the Mensheviks outnumbered their representatives seven to six. Writing their speeches, the Bolshevik Duma deputies, A.E. Badaev, G.I. Petrovskii, M.K. Muranov, N.R. Shagov, F.N. Samoilov, and R.V. Malinovskii, were directly under Kamenev's purview. A written declaration of the Bolshevik faction presented to the Duma at the outbreak of the war called for the 'international solidarity of the proletariat… to find the means to quickly halt this war.'[160]

At first glance this appears to be the centrist position Robert Grimm would later advocate. Instead of furthering internal antagonisms over endorsing war credits or promoting civil war socialists needed to direct the working class to agitate for peace. Kamenev agreed with Lenin over the inevitability of civil war breaking out in Europe, but he was more politically cautious. He knew that such a message would not be tolerated in the Duma and that it would stoke discord with other socialists abroad. He therefore avoided direct confrontation.

Proof of Kamenev's resolve against dividing international Social-Democracy can be found at his 1915 trial. The failure of the Bolshevik and Menshevik Duma deputies to support the war brought with it political repression. When Kamenev had summoned their Duma deputies to a meeting just outside Petrograd in Ozerki for the 4 November 1915 general party conference at which Kamenev denounced Lenin's views on the war, a well-informed Tsarist police force arrested them on the charge of plotting to overthrow the state. On 10 February 1915 the 'trial of

[160] A.E. Badaev and V.A. Bystryanskogo, eds., *Bol'shevistskaya fraktsiya IV gosudarstvennoi dumy*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe sotsial'noe-ekonomicheskoe izdatel'stvo, 1938, p. 508.

the Duma Deputies' began in Petrograd. The public prosecutor, G.P. Nenarokomov, tried to prove that Kamenev was one of the organization's leaders and was therefore guilty of the views expressed in their paper, *Sotsial-Demokrat,* where Lenin had advocated 'defeatism'. Not only had a defence witness, M.V. Berenshtam, said that Kamenev had not said anything similar to the views expressed in the party press, but Kamenev's defence counsel, A. F. Kerensky, pointed out the fact that there was absolutely no evidence linking Kamenev to the expressed paper's views.[161] At the trial Kamenev spoke little, and the few words he managed to utter were about his organizing the meeting in hopes of opening a new paper.[162] There was certainly the opportunity to denounce 'social-chauvinists', as G. D. Kuchin had attempted to so when the judge halted his testimony,[163] so Kamenev's general silence indicated that he did not wish to use the trial to divide Social-Democrats. Even though he faced a possible death sentence, his criticism of fellow socialists would not have warranted capital punishment. For his anti-war views, Kamenev was sentenced to 4-8 years exile.

No one understood Kamenev's silence better than Lenin, who wrote of Kamenev's failure to denounce 'social-chauvinists' as most definitely an 'incorrect method, and from the point of view of a revolutionary Social-Democrat, it is intolerable.'[164] In contrast, Lenin praised the Duma deputies M. K. Muranov and G. I. Petrovsky for their attempt to prove worker support for the central organ's position.

[161] The police search had only turned up a single one-line note in Kamenev's handwriting which read 'articles, chronicles, correspondences'.
[162] *Rech'*, February 11, 1915, p. 4.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 26 p. 171.

While Lenin regarded supporters of the war as being beyond the pale, Kamenev left the door open for rapprochement. His three major works written in exile in Achinsk aimed to convince, not divide. One short work entitled *The Collapse of the International* never used the words 'traitor', 'renegade', 'desertion', or 'turncoat' to describe the 'social-chauvinists', the socialists of the International in general, or Kautsky. A single sentence in his brochure noted that nationalism had made 'former allies enemies', but the use of the word 'enemies' was not a call for socialist division but an observation of the current war. He never mentioned combating other socialists as a primary goal, maintaining that the real tragedy of the International was not its collapse, but the 'bloodless' triumph of imperialism over it. In *Imperialism and the Balkan Republic* he limited himself to merely putting the word 'socialist' in quotes when describing self-proclaimed socialists in government posts. When condemning the behaviour of the German and Austrian socialists' position of trying to include the Balkans into a 'Central Europe', he called them the 'servants of imperialism', but nothing more.[165] His 1916 book, *About A.I. Herzen and N.G. Chernyshevskii* was exclusively devoted to lambasting liberals and said absolutely nothing about international socialist parties.

What Kamenev and Lenin did agree on was the need to establish a Third International to combat socialism's strengthened capitalist adversary 'on the basis of the new aspirations of a new epoch of world development.'[166] However, for Kamenev it was a waste of revolutionary resources to divide socialists, and he believed they did not have to tear down the Second International before they could begin anew. Winning over opponents remained possible. Lenin may have had a sincere interest in creating a Third International, but he remained fixated on

[165] Lev Kamenev, *Imperializm i Balkanskaya Respublika*, Peterburg: Izdatel'stva Priboi, 1917, p. 20.
[166] Lev Kamenev, *Krushenie Internatsionala*, Petrograd: Knigoizdatel'stvo 'Volna', 1917, p. 24.

attacking the remnants of the Second International for what he believed was its acceptance of some form of Marxist revisionism, writing that the bankrupt 'social-chauvinists' farce in continuing the institution served only to conceal their 'betrayal'.[167]

An 'Incomplete' Bourgeois Revolution and Supporting Revolutionary Civil War

In Achinsk exile with Stalin, V. Vardin, and S.P. Medvedev, when news reached Kamenev that the 23 February Petrograd women's protest for bread had culminated in the toppling of the Tsar, the formation of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, and the Duma Committee's establishment of a 'Provisional Government' to direct the country, he quickly dispatched a telegram to the capital in support of the Petrograd Soviet.[168] In the absence of any workers and almost completely surrounded by officer regiments and a yet to be disbanded police force, Kamenev acted practically and joined a committee composed of officers and local bourgeois merchants. The overthrow of the autocracy was a revolutionary step and the committee dispatched a telegram supporting the Provisional Government and congratulating Michael Romanov for refusing to ascend the throne. Not a single Bolshevik present, Stalin included, objected.[169]

It was at this point that Kamenev developed his theory that would pit him against Lenin in early 1917. The Tsar had abdicated, but the nobility's domination of the countryside persisted and no land had transferred to the peasantry. His 1916 fear that the bourgeoisie would not break

[167] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 30, p. 38.
[168] RGASPI 323/2/103/108.
[169] To save face later against accusations stemming from the SR paper *Eniseiskii Krai*, 8 April *Pravda* published Kamenev's denial of ever having endorsed the telegram to Michael Romanov. Virtually unimportant in party affairs at the time, Stalin would later use this episode to tarnish Kamenev's reputation in 1926. See RGASPI 323/2/76/77, 323/2/103/1 and chapter 7 of this dissertation.

completely from feudalism was realised, and in his view the bourgeoisie had in essence stalled the revolution from completing in mid-development in order to use the old aristocratic order for legitimacy. He therefore dubbed the February Revolution an 'incomplete' bourgeois revolution.

Upon arriving to Petrograd 12 March he was further convinced that the revolution was 'incomplete' by the fact that inside the Petrograd Soviet workers had formed a bloc with the peasant petty-bourgeois SRs. Kamenev argued that had the bourgeois revolution truly been completed 'that block could not exist', because according to Marxist principles of class antagonism, instead 'the proletariat would be conducting a revolutionary struggle against the petty bourgeois bloc.'[170] This ideological inflexibility showed his commitment to both Marx and Lassalle's contention that a self-aware working class would exhibit a distinct proletarian line. Its alignment with 'petty-bourgeois' peasants signalled that a united struggle continued against the old feudal order. It was thus under this premise that as the senior ranking Bolshevik and acting party leader in Petrograd, Kamenev directed the Bolsheviks to cooperate within the Soviet worker-petty-bourgeois bloc to exert their 'hegemonic control' over the Provisional Government to 'complete' the bourgeois revolution.

As an experienced editor and organiser, Kamenev knew that his first task upon returning from exile was to try to steer *Pravda* in favour of his views by curtailing its far left pursuits. V.M. Molotov, P.Zalutsky and A.G. Shlyapnikov, as members of the Bureau of the Central Committee controlled *Pravda*, and supported Lenin's line advocating Russia transform the imperialist war into a civil war.[171] The Bolshevik Vyborg District Committee was demanding another revolution

[170] *Sed'maya (aprel'skaya) vserossiiskaya konferentsiya RSDRP (bol'shevikov): protokoly*, p. 80-81.
[171] *Pravda*, March 10, 1917, p. 3.

to install a Revolutionary Provisional Government to carry out revolutionary war. Both their messages were so out of tune with the vast population that it wrought only indignation from fellow socialists. The paper had become so associated with these far left slogans that Kamenev entertained the idea of shutting down its publication and starting up a whole new one altogether.[172] Instead, in an 'editorial revolution,' senior party leaders, Stalin, Kamenev, and Muranov replaced Molotov, M.I. Kalinin, and K.S. Eremeev as *Pravda's* editors.[173] However, still upset with Kamenev's breach of discipline during his 1915 trial where he had failed to advocate defeatism or attack fellow socialists, the Bureau of the Central Committee mandated that Kamenev's published articles be left unsigned.[174]

D.A. Longley has shown the various competing Bolshevik currents within Petrograd at the outset of revolution, and as he demonstrated, absent of the Vyborg District Committee's radical enthusiasm, the Bolshevik Petersburg Committee was more in line with Kamenev's principles. Unlike the Vyborg District Committee, its members had not directly participated in directing the worker protests that had helped topple the autocracy as they had been in prison at the outbreak of revolution. With their cooler revolutionary enthusiasm, they had taken a more moderate position by passing a resolution on 3 March to not oppose the Provisional government as long as it coincided with the interests of the proletariat.[175] Their support was critical for him to lead *Pravda* to call on workers to distrust liberal promises, remain steadfast in their demands, and 'support every step leading to the eradication of all the remains of the Tsarist-landowning

[172] N.N. Sukhanov, *The Russian Revolution: 1917,* trans., Joel Carmichael, London: Oxford University Press, 1955, p. 234.
[173] A. Shlyapnikov. *Semnadtsatyi god: kniga vtoraya*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1925, p. 180.
[174] D.A. Longley, 'The Divisions of the Bolshevik Party in March 1917', *Soviet Studies*, 24.1, 1972, 71.
[175] For a detailed analysis of the various factions at this time within the Bolshevik party, see Longley.

regime.'[176] Using the *exact* words from Lassalle's 'Working Man's Programme', Kamenev declared that the proletariat had to act as a 'watchman' to control the Provisional Government.[177]

It is at this point that historians such as Alexander Rabinowitch, R. Nation, and Robert G. Wesson have wrongly assessed Kamenev's position.[178] Kamenev was not advancing 'conditional support' for the Provisional Government or Tsereteli's Menshevik 'socialist-defencist' position in his 15 March *Pravda* article where he called upon soldiers to 'remain at their posts' and to answer the attacking nations 'bullet for bullet and shell for shell'.[179] The real purpose of the article is clear only at its conclusion, where Kamenev called for the proletariat to 'pressure' the government to 'immediately open peace negotiations'. Similar to Lenin, Molotov, and Shlyapnikov, Kamenev was in favour of revolutionary civil war, but he did not believe Russia would be the war's starting point. It had to originate from more developed Western countries such as Germany, and proposing peace was a tactic to obtain that end. At a meeting of the Bolshevik Petersburg Committee four days after the *Pravda* article concerning the war, Kamenev explained that by adopting slogans to halt the war the Russian peasantry would together with the party take the Provisional Government 'by the throat' to propose peace, and then, 'when', *not if*, Wilhelm II refused that peace, the 'German Social-Democrats will have the basis for an uprising…'[180] The primary aim of his policy was therefore to foment revolution

[176] *Pravda*. March 14, 1917, p. 1-2.
[177] Ibid., p. 1-2.
[178] See Nation, p. 175, Alexander Rabinowitch, *Prelude to Revolution: The Petrograd Bolsheviks and the July 1917 Uprising,* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968, p. 36, and Robert G. Wesson, *Lenin's Legacy: The Story of the CPSU,* Stanford: Hoover Institution Publication, 1978, p. 52
[179] *Pravda*. March 15, 1917, p. 1.
[180] *Pervyi legal'nyi peterburgskii komitet bol'shevikov v 1917 g.,* Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1927, p. 50.

abroad and not to actually achieve peace. He was not a Menshevik 'defencist', but a Bolshevik promoting revolutionary civil war.

With no knowledge of Kamenev's intent, Kamenev's poorly phrased 'bullet for bullet' remark had enraged the party left. On 15 March an emergency meeting of the Central Committee Bureau and the new editors was summoned to discuss Kamenev's article. Kamenev refused to yield. A new editorial board was elected. Despite protests from Nogin, G.I. Bokii, and M.S. Olminsky, Kamenev's editorial talent could not be ignored and he remained at the head of *Pravda*.[181] As a compromise, Molotov and Ereveev were restored to maintain balance.[182]

Kamenev could have avoided the stiff resistance he met from the party's left-leaning adherents over his position if he had told them upfront of his long-term strategy, but he had kept his plans close to his chest to gain much broader support. Kamenev's political talent was in finding common ground between opponents. Upon Tsereteli's return from Siberian exile the Mensheviks had taken up the cause of defencism; to agree to support the war to preserve the gains of the revolution. This served to alienate those Mensheviks most committed to internationalism.[183] Directing the party to agitate for peace was more important than overtly advocating for revolutionary civil war because they could ally with Martov's dissatisfied Menshevik-Internationalists to aid them in the steps to reach their ultimate aim.

[181] M. Moskalev. *Byuro Tsentral'noro Komiteta RSDRP v Rossii (Avgust 1903 – Mart 1917).* Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1964, p. 287.
[182] Even after the VII April Party Conference which reviewed his behaviour, Kamenev suffered no real consequences and remained a senior party member second only to Lenin and Zinoviev. See Moskalev, p. 288.
[183] Rex A. Wade, *The Russian Search for Peace*, California: Stanford University Press, 1969, p. 21.

Longley's assessment that Kamenev and Stalin had only achieved a 'public relations' triumph is wrong.[184] The anger of the party left soon proved irrelevant for the moment as Kamenev was in fact gaining support; he and Stalin were elected to be the representatives of the party in the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet.[185] Then just three days later on 18 March, Kamenev's position received the Petersburg Committee's official approval.[186] At meetings between workers and servicemen in the *Sestrortsrkii* small-arms factory, workers declared their acceptance of the Petersburg Committee's new policy to press the Provisional Government to conclude the war without annexations or indemnities.[187] His tactics had advanced their party's aims by increasing working class support, and as shall be shown, began to close the divide between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks.

Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' and the Mensheviks

Much of the animus between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks had dissipated with the February Revolution. Party organisation was no longer an important issue as all political parties were legal and free to operate openly. The bourgeois revolution had arrived and therefore the theoretical debate surrounding to either support them or lead an independent working class movement was for the moment moot. Further, unlike other Social-Democrats abroad the Mensheviks were in common cause with the Bolsheviks in opposing war credits. They had also played an important role in establishing the Petrograd Soviet, and had opposed any kind of

[184] See Longley, p. 62.
[185] Moskalev. p. 287.
[186] Rabinowitch, *Prelude to Revolution*, p. 36.
[187] N. Avdeev. *Revolutsiya: 1917 goda (khronika sobytii)*, vol. 1, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1923, p. 112.

participation with the bourgeoisie in government.[188] The Menshevik defencist stance to the war was the only major divide remaining.

Kamenev was absolutely right in believing his 'peace' strategy could forge cooperation between the Bolsheviks and Martov's Menshevik-Internationalists if the Bolshevik's were less direct about transforming the war into revolutionary civil war. At the 19 March joint meeting of the Central Committee Bureau and the enlarged Petersburg Committee two resolutions had been put forward from both 'left' and moderate Bolshevik groups. The first resolution desired to ally with the Menshevik-Internationalists in hopes of possible unification. The second, put forward by Kalinin and V.L. Zalezhskii, advised to share information with the Menshevik-Internationalists on the condition that they openly break with the defencist group operating in the newspaper *Rabochaya Gazeta.* With both resolutions committed to rapprochement, Kamenev had a mandate to pursue cooperation with Menshevik-Internationalists, which he did. The party lines between the left-wing Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks began to blur, deepening the divide between Martov's minority and Tseretelli's defencist majority, and by the end of March a small group of internationalists joined the Bolshevik delegation at the All-Russian Conference of Soviets. So successful was Kamenev in finding grounds for cooperation that his friend and Menshevik-Internationalist N.N. Sukhanov reflected, 'I cannot conceal my deep conviction that if all the Bolsheviks had shared Kamenev's views – at least during the first year of the revolution – then I would have been a Bolshevik too, and a left one at that.'[189] Stalin and Muranov supported Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' to find common ground and they very quickly had no reason to

[188] Ziva Galili, *The Menshevik Leaders in the Russian Revolution: Social Realities and Political Strategies,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989, p. 58.
[189] Sukhanov, p. 257 and p. 258.

worry over their party's left-wing party indignation as Bolshevik moderates arriving from the provinces backed the three leaders now representing the party majority.[190]

Therefore, under Kamenev's leadership at the 28 March to 3 April All-Russian Conference of Soviets, Kamenev directed his party towards a Bolshevik-Menshevik alliance by acknowledging the Mensheviks as equals. Kamenev no longer concealed his strategy and subtly declared that they needed 'to transform the Russian national revolution into the prologue of an uprising of all nations against their belligerent countries...'[191] The main purpose of socialists in Russia should be to 'create a new International, a new brotherhood of nations', which would unite the proletariat for the war's end. He focused on socialism's sworn enemy, the capitalist imperialists, and avoided open disagreements. He addressed Mensheviks and SRs as 'comrades', as members of the 'revolutionary democracy'. Despite there being fewer than 80 self-proclaimed internationalists, a significant part of the delegates applauded his speeches.

Seeing Kamenev's influence and ability to broaden Bolshevik support for peace, the Bolshevik leadership began to come round to Kamenev's political strategy, electing him over A.M. Kollontai to be their representative for the remainder of the conference. Although the Bolshevik resolution which called for an end to the war without annexations or indemnities with a clause calling for class civil war in Europe only obtained 57 votes to Tsereteli's 325 majority, Kamenev found compromise concerning the Provisional Government. At a key point in Kamenev's 1 April speech he proclaimed that the Bolsheviks were not seeking the overthrow of the Provisional Government and would support the government on the condition it fulfilled the

[190] Ibid., p. 225.
[191] Shlyapnikov, p. 218.

aims of the revolution as guided by the Petrograd Soviet.[192] This public declaration was milder than when he had told fellow Bolsheviks that they had to take the Provisional Government 'by the throat' and act as a 'watchman' to control it, but it was a tactic. The declaration achieved its aim and prompted the Mensheviks to withdraw their resolution drawn up by Yu. M. Steklov and to support a joint resolution more in line with Bolshevik aspirations to reflect the 'various tendencies' present at the conference. With both parties supporting, it passed.

Soon after talk of unification between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks began in earnest, with Stalin one of the chief supporters,[193] but as Sukhanov recalled, Kamenev 'had his own views and was working on Russian revolutionary soil. But, he was casting a "sideways" look abroad, where they had *their* own views, which were not the same as his.'[194]

No Social-Democracy – Lenin and his *April Theses*

Whilst Kamenev was contemplating cooperation with the Mensheviks, Lenin was intent on dividing Social-Democracy in Russia. One of his first instructions to the party in Petrograd on 6 March was to have 'no rapprochement with other parties.'[195] At this time he had long made enemies of the 'social-chauvinists' and 'social-patriots' such as Plekhanov, Potresov, and K.A. Gvozdyov within Russia, but his call to avoid 'any rapprochement' showed that at the outset Lenin had no intention of ever cooperating with any socialists, a rather odd decision considering the fact that the Mensheviks headed the Petrograd Soviet and had distanced themselves from the Provisional Government. Lenin simply wanted his ideas to remain central to the Bolsheviks;

[192] Shlyapnikov, p. 238. See also Avdeev. *Revolutsiya: 1917 goda (khronika sobytii)*, vol. 1, p. 155.
[193] Moskalev, p. 294.
[194] Sukhanov, p. 257.
[195] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 31, p. 7.

disagreements over the war and his unshakeable belief that they were living during capitalism's final stage made inter-party compromise intolerable for him.

In his 12 March *Second Letter from Afar* he wrote that the appointment of the socialist Trudovik Kerensky into the Provisional Government meant that he had 'deserted' to the bourgeoisie, warning that a 'call to support the new government is, one can say, a classical example of betrayal of the cause of the revolution and the cause of the proletariat… independent of how sincere and committed to socialism the leaders and supporters' may be.[196]

Lenin and Kamenev were thus headed in opposite directions. Acting courier and Bolshevik, Kollontai, had already arrived by the time of the 19 March meeting and brought with her Lenin's first two *Letters from Afar*.[197] While Lenin was drawing lines in the sand to thwart any compromise to his views, Kamenev was downplaying theoretical differences in favour of broadening Bolshevik appeal.

Lenin's belligerent discourse had its desired results as upon his arrival he terminated Bolshevik and Menshevik cooperation. Upset with Kamenev's actions, on 3 April Lenin rebuked Kamenev at the Beloostrov train station outside Petrograd, asking 'what is this that you are writing in *Pravda*? We have seen several issues and really cursed at you.'[198] At the train station in Petrograd Lenin purposely ignored the Menshevik and Petrograd Soviet welcoming delegations headed by Chekhidze and M.I. Skobelev. He then proceeded to use his *April Theses* the following day on 4 April at the All-Russian Conference to derail Menshevik and Bolshevik deliberations over forming a single party.

[196] Ibid., p. 30.
[197] Moskalev, p. 289.
[198] F. Roskol'nikov, 'Priezd tov. Lenina v Rossiyu', *Proletarskaya Revolyutsiya*, no. 13, 1923, p. 221.

In Lenin's *April Theses* he proposed a government derived from the soviets whose support base consisted exclusively of the working class and the peasantry. While this certainly was consistent with the Bolshevik position from post-1905 advocating an 'uninterrupted revolution' leading to the 'dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry', Lenin failed to express the precise timing power should pass to the soviets. Lenin was not calling for immediate revolution, and that much is clear. However, in his theses he specifically stated that the 'second stage' of the revolution was already underway. This charged wording was deliberately contrived to provoke the Mensheviks who felt that Russia could not move towards socialism without a sustained period of capitalist development. Lenin insisted that the Bolsheviks had to deny any and all support for the Provisional Government and eradicate the bourgeois elements within the workers' section of the Soviet in preparation. It was essential they ready for the next revolution and the establishment of a republic of Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies. Clearly, Lenin did not accept Kamenev's strategy of a Russia declared 'peace' to befriend the Mensheviks. To even use 'peace' as a strategy would betray his convictions. Revolution had to begin everywhere, including Russia. His plan was bolder, more direct, and would ensure the primacy of his views by creating a policy that would garner few party allies.

Lenin's proposed government also completely jarred against what the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks had long believed; that the socialist government would be a parliamentary republic. This was what the Social-Democratic Party founder Lassalle had envisioned. This is a theme that shall shortly be discussed in the following section, but for now it is important to note that Lenin's support of a soviet style government was more closely connected with anarchist ideals rather than with Social-Democracy because it proposed a decentralised form of government where local

autonomy outweighed central direction in a federation style system of local governing institutions. The Mensheviks were immediately repulsed by the idea.

To solidify Bolshevik isolation from Social-Democracy at large Lenin proposed the formation of a new International, ensuring his domination of its composition with like-minded left-wing socialists. Then, to deepen division at home, he called to change his party's name to the 'Communist Party'. This was a gesture to illustrate that *only* the Bolsheviks were the true Marxists. More specifically, only Lenin knew the correct course.

His theses showed Lenin's monological discourse *par excellence*. Zinoviev would soon admit that they were deliberately worded to make a loud noise with a 'big policy'.[199] His goal to divide the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks was a success. At a later meeting of the All-Russian Conference the ex-Bolshevik Social-Democrat I.P. Goldenberg declared that Lenin's anarchism made it 'ludicrous to talk of unity with those... who are placing themselves outside Social-Democracy of their own accord!'[200] By the end of the evening all hopes of a revived Social-Democracy were dead.

Kamenev's Struggle against the *April Theses*

Lars T. Lih has contended that Lenin's *April Theses* displayed 'more continuity than discontinuity' to the 'Old Bolshevik' position on revolution in 1905.[201] As illustrated previously, Lenin's call to establish a government based on the working class and the peasantry was certainly well within the 'Old Bolshevik' framework. Lih, however, is wrong to assert that Kamenev's

[199] *Sed'maya (aprel'skaya) vserossiiskaya konferentsiya RSDRP (bol'shevikov): protokoly*, p. 104.
[200] Sukhanov, p. 287.
[201] Lars T. Lih, 'Lenin and Bolshevism', in S.A. Smith, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 66.

'incomplete' bourgeois revolution theory would have led to the October Revolution regardless of Lenin's *April Theses*. Kamenev did not support the Provisional Government, but his theory prevented him from endorsing preparations for revolution. Kamenev was convinced that on Marxist principle the working class and the 'petty-bourgeois' peasantry would remain united in a bloc to overcome feudalism. Discussing revolution was pointless. The vast majority of the working class were not Social-Democratic. This meant that the proletariat first had to be divorced from the petty-bourgeois peasant in order to ensure its hegemony. Kamenev could not endorse Lenin's 'second stage' of revolution because the 'first stage' had not yet completed.[202] Strictly adhering to Lassalle, further working class development was needed. Kamenev did not envision that the Bolshevik party could replace what was to be genuine proletarian management of the state. The 'continuity' Lih failed to outline when evaluating Kamenev's position was that his 1905 and 1917 position remained constant. He did not believe the proletariat was ready to rule. He made the argument in 1905, and throughout 1917. To rid themselves of the counter-revolutionary Provisional Government, Kamenev would have led the party to the Constituent Assembly, not to October.

That was precisely why Kamenev wrote on 12 April in *Pravda* that in Lenin's theses there was no 'answer to a single question to the political life in Russia today' and that Lenin was formulating positions capable of implementation only in German, French, or British circumstances. In Marxist terms Kamenev was right. Socialist revolution had prospects in Western Europe where decades of industrial development had passed. Russia seriously lagged behind. Although there was nothing in his statement that was contrary to Lenin's previously

[202] *Pravda*. April 12, 1917, p. 2-3.

formulated 'uninterrupted' revolution, it is evident that he wished to carry it to the letter and complete the bourgeois revolution before moving forward. Kamenev bluntly admitted on 24 April that he was presently 'against the transformation of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist one.'[203]

Lih has also put forward the idea that the Old Bolsheviks did not find Lenin's proposal for a government based on the soviets particularly 'shocking or unacceptable'. Given that Kamenev and Nogin led the VII Party Conference to reject Lenin's proposal, it is clear that it did rattle Old Bolshevik sensibilities.[204] For Kamenev the inherent syndicalist and anarchist leanings in Lenin's Soviet-dominated government ran contrary to the whole concept of Lassalle's future state as a merging of society and state into one. Kamenev used the current situation to explain his severe apprehension to Lenin's vison. At the *Patronnyi* and *Sestroretskyi* factories managers had fled in the days following the February Revolution and workers themselves had been forced to take control of production. With similar situations prevalent in numerous plants and factories, representatives from twelve of the largest state-run artillery factories employing 100,000 workers met in mid-March to discuss how best to organize and manage the factories. Workers at the conference refused to take responsibility for the technical and administrative organization of industry and instead desired a 'constitutional factory' where workers could control the work-shop floor and defend their interests against plant administrators. Not only did Kamenev point to these events as evidence he was right as to the lack of a general working class will to take 'the decisive steps to socialism', but in explaining the workers' aims it is possible to see in Kamenev's words

[203] *Sed'maya (aprel'skaya) vserossiiskaya konferentsiya RSDRP (bol'shevikov): protokoly*, p. 79.
[204] Ibid., p. 102.

the essence of his Lassallean views. He wrote that the path to socialism would:

> 'not go through the partial seizure of factories or plants, nor through separate communes, but through the s*eizure of the central apparatuses of all government-economic practices,* to the transition of power to the hands of the proletariat, as a class, managing banks, the railroads, and food supplies *on a state scale*. And in this we are entirely with the workers' conference of factories of the Artillery Departments - against comrade Lenin'[205] (emphasis added).

The state was to be managed and directed through a central government agency. It would not embrace syndicalist or anarchist ideas of local power structures. The Old Bolshevik Kamenev was certainly against Lenin on more than just a 'strategic outlook' detailed by Lih. He had legitimate theoretical concerns.

The differences enumerated between Lenin and Kamenev had been developing since the outbreak of war and led the two into ideological and political conflict. Initially the majority backed Kamenev against Lenin's *April Theses*. Krupskaya recalled that *'*a struggle started within the Bolshevik organization.'[206] True to his 'Bolshevik Centrism', even though in disagreement the dialogical Kamenev defended Lenin's right to publish his views. However, he wrote 8 April in *Pravda* that pending some kind of new Central Committee decision, the resolutions accepted by the Central Committee Bureau and the Bolshevik delegates at the All-Russian Conference 'remains our platform, which we will defend.'[207] S. Ya. Bogdat'ev, I.A. Teodorvich, and Kamenev spoke for the party majority against the theses at a 6 April Central Committee Bureau

[205] *Pravda*. April 12, 1917, p. 2-3.
[206] Krupskaya, p. 349.
[207] *Pravda*. April 8, 1917, p. 2.

meeting.[208] Kamenev's Petersburg Committee supporters flatly rejected it on 8 April in a vote of 13 to 2, and party committees in the provinces followed suit.[209]

The War Loan

Accounts of Lenin's triumph over Kamenev's majority position have focused mainly on Lenin's personal leadership. The narrative runs that Lenin simply cajoled the rank and file to accept his theses. Robert V. Daniels, Ronald Clark, Beryl Williams, and Robert Service have all dwelt on this theme. Service goes a bit further and attributes part of Lenin's success to the outside influence of the 'Miluikov note', but this only favoured his position as it regarded opposition to the Provisional Government and not the party's attitude towards the Mensheviks.[210] These explanations fall short of explaining how the Bolshevik faction came to break from Menshevik cooperation to accept Lenin's divisive *April Theses*.

The most important factor which brought Lenin the party majority's support against the Mensheviks was the Provisional Government's 'Liberty Loan'.[211] Issued by the Provisional Government 27 March under Minister-President Prince G.E. L'vov, the Liberty Loan sparked intense debate within the socialist parties because the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks had hitherto stood united in opposing war credits. If the Mensheviks changed course and endorsed a war loan issued by a bourgeois government, to the Bolsheviks it would be tantamount to the same betrayal in August 1914 when the French and German socialists voted for war credits. That was why

[208] Moskalev, p. 296.
[209] Rabinowitch, *Prelude to Revolution*, p. 40-41.
[210] See Daniels, p. 44, Ronald Clark, *Lenin: The Man Behind the Mask*, London: Bloomsburry Publishing, 1989, digital edition, chapter 9, Beryl Williams, *Lenin: Profiles in Power*, New York: Pearson Education Limited, 2000, p. 66, and Robert Service, *Lenin: A Biography*, London: Pan Books, 2010, p. 269.
[211] Lenin himself admitted the strength the war loan had on rallying the party. See *Sed'maya (aprel'skaya) vserossiiskaya konferentsiya RSDRP (bol'shevikov): protokoly*, p. 111.

Kamenev did his utmost in the Petrograd Soviet to prevent it approving the war loans. In the Petrograd Soviet on 16 April, Kamenev tried to convince the Mensheviks and SRs with a sensible alternative to raise money 'not from a loan, but from the pockets of the bourgeoisie.'[212] Menshevik leaders were afraid to take any step which may reduce the country's capacity to wage war and directed the Petrograd Soviet to support war credits on the condition the Provisional Government publically accepted the Soviet's 14 March declaration that denounced any annexations or indemnities. Their trust was clearly misplaced as the Kadet Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pavel Miliukov tried to circumvent the Soviet by dispatching a secret message (the so-called 'Miliukov note') to its allies 18 April that promised Russia would continue the 'war to a victorious end'. When the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet heard the message the next day, Kamenev felt his position secure, asserting that 'the majority that were standing for the loan cannot now remain in their position.'[213]

Outside the Petrograd Soviet thousands of workers flooded the streets in protest at Miliukov's note on 20 April and a hopeful Kamenev joined by Sukhanov took part in a joint session of the Provisional Government, the Executive Committee, and the Committee of the Duma that night to discuss the situation. At the meeting Tsereteli ignored Kamenev and Sukhanov and staked his party's future on maintaining an alliance with the bourgeoisie, proposing that the Provisional Government simply issue a new declaration more in line with the Soviet's 14 March proposal. On 21 April the Provisional Government announced the desired

[212] B.D. Gal'perina and V.I. Startsev, eds., *Petrogradskii sovet pabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov v 1917 godu: protokoly, stenogrammy i otchety, rezolyutsii i postanovleniya obshchikh sobranii sektsii, zasedanii ispolnitel'noro komiteta, byuro ispolnitel'nogo komiteta i fraktsii (27 fevralya – 25 oktyabrya 1917 goda)*, vol. 2, Saint-Petersburg: Rossiiskaya politicheskaya entsiklopediya, 1995, p. 209.
[213] Ibid., p. 241.

response and the 'April Crisis' protests subsided.[214] The Menshevik leadership believed they were safeguarding the gains of the revolution, but they had to break their solidarity with the Bolsheviks over war credits to do it.

To many Bolsheviks the Menshevik support for war credits brought irrevocable separation. Bolshevik policy was centred on its international position and supporting the war meant supporting capitalism. The shift of party opinion from Kamenev's position of compromise to Lenin's call to completely break from the Mensheviks was so abrupt that it can only be explained by the sense of betrayal the Bolsheviks felt over the 'Liberty Loan' and not by intra-party manoeuvres, especially since it was during the Petrograd Soviet discussion of the war loan and the 'April Crisis' that the 16 to 22 April First Bolshevik Petrograd City Conference convened to determine Bolshevik policy. Lenin tactfully used the loan to his advantage, putting in his draft resolution that in relations with other socialist groups the 'the voting for the loan and commitment to revolutionary defencism in general is considered an absolute betrayal of socialism'.[215] In tandem, Zinoviev in *Pravda* declared that the loan goes 'in the face of all principles of socialism' and offers only a 'new sea of blood'.[216] A strong showing of Vyborg Bolsheviks had ensured that Lenin's resolution denouncing Mensheviks and SRs passed in a vote 33 to 6, despite Lenin's reprimands that their revolutionary zeal was pure 'adventurism'. Even Kamenev's previous supporters from the Petersburg Committee began to desert to Lenin as among those elected to draft the committee's resolutions were Lenin, Molotov, Zinoviev, and

[214] I.G. Tsereteli, "Reminiscences of the February Revolution: The April Crisis", *The Russian Review*, vol. 14, April, 1955, p. 197-199.
[215] Lenin, *PSS,* vol. 31, p. 257-258.
[216] G. Zinoviev, *God revolyutsii: fevral' 1917-mart 1918,* Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1925, p. 42.

Stalin, all favouring Lenin and outvoting Kamenev.[217] Kamenev could not retain support for his platform based on the All-Russian Conference resolution from March. It failed 6 to 20, with 9 abstaining.[218]

An Airplane to the Revolution

From the outset of the February Revolution there had been high hopes that unification between the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks would occur, and Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' which had tried to achieve cooperation without sacrificing Bolshevik values had been central to that discussion. Although now in the minority due to the war loan, at the VII All-Russian Conference of the Bolsheviks which began 24 April, Kamenev gave a concerted effort to justify his theory of the 'incomplete' bourgeois revolution and this sharply contrasted with Lenin's revolutionary aspirations. Central to their disagreement was how to deal with their opponents. Lenin felt that only his position was truly Marxist and castigated all his non-Bolshevik critics as enemies, whereas Kamenev was willing to leave a dialogue open between socialist parties so that unity on specific objectives could still be achieved. It was therefore at this conference that their divergence came into full view and forced the party to decide between the two. Whereas one was monological and would set an authoritarian path, the other was dialogical and would pursue more democratic ends.

At the conference and throughout 1917 Lenin and Kamenev's attitude to political discourse was best revealed by their contrasting definitions of the term 'revolutionary democracy'. The phrase itself was used by every group, from the Kadets and Socialist

[217] *Petrogradskaya obshchegorodskaya konferentsiya RSDRP (b)*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1958, p. 22.
[218] Ibid., p. 37.

Revolutionaries to the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks, with each defining it differently. To the Mensheviks the term encompassed all layers of society which had overthrown the Tsar, from the workers to the bourgeoisie. Lenin defined 'revolutionary democracy' in an effort to thwart Moscow Bolsheviks from seeking socialist cooperation to be 'not suited anywhere; it is a phrase. It covers up rather than lays bare the antagonisms of class interests.'[219] He believed the 'phrase' was allowing 'petty-bourgeois' influences into their ranks and wanted the words struck from their resolutions.[220] The words illustrate Lenin's refusal to acknowledge any other party's participation in shaping Russia but his own. The Bolsheviks would gain nothing in cooperation. In total disagreement, Kamenev saw 'revolutionary democracy' as a near synonym for 'Social-Democracy'. He excluded liberals and right-wing groups but included every socialist party. He complained that 'Lenin does not like the words "revolutionary democracy"' because there 'are shades of socialism among the proletariat…' and 'a collision of the bourgeoisie with the entire revolutionary democracy is inevitable.'[221] He saw value in joint collaboration and in achieving common goals.

As for the tactical programme adhering to Kamenev's 'incomplete' bourgeois revolution and his pursuit of cooperation, it took prompts from F.E. Dzerzhinsky to hear out Kamenev's proposal.[222] Unlike bourgeois revolutions of the eighteenth century, Kamenev maintained that the 'hegemony' of the proletariat was capable of controlling the bourgeois Provisional Government through mass pressure as the government was dependent on labour and the forces of production

[219] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 31, p. 248.
[220] *Sed'maya (aprel'skaya) vserossiiskaya konferentsiya RSDRP (bol'shevikov): protokoly*, p. 67.
[221] Ibid., p. 82.
[222] Ibid., p. 78.

in order to prosecute the war.[223] However, the proletariat still needed allies and believed that their influence would grow as war weariness would bring soldier support. This would then drive the petty-bourgeoisie into a revolutionary alliance with the proletariat on a Bolshevik platform of peace.[224] As the Bolsheviks worked from within the worker-petty-bourgeois bloc, they could push forward their agenda and even win the non-proletarian elements to their side.[225] This was not the line Lenin was espousing by openly declaring that the 'second stage' of the revolution was afoot. Kamenev desired mass support and socialist cooperation to complete the bourgeois revolution.

In order to demonstrate that much of what he proposed was already in place and working, Kamenev and V.P. Miliutin pointed to the Petrograd Soviet's authority as evidence. During the 'April Crisis' the Soviet had successfully ordered soldiers under General L.G. Kornilov not to enter Petrograd.[226] This was an effective use of the Petrograd Soviet's 'Order Number One', which was a decree subjecting soldiers to orders from the Provisional Government only if approved by the Soviet. The Petrograd Soviet had also used its authority to push forward the 8-hour work day and had arrested government officials of the old regime. The Provisional Government would not have done those things without Soviet authority. Miliutin indicated that it was a 'display of our force which dictated the moment.'[227]

[223] Ibid., p. 80.
[224] Ibid., p. 85.
[225] Ibid., p. 81.
[226] Ibid., p. 83.
[227] Ibid., p. 87.

Lenin was not convinced, stating plainly that 'control without power is an empty phrase.'[228] Supporting Lenin's majority position, A.S. Bubnov called the feats enumerated by Kamenev and Miliutin as 'paper control,' believing government decrees nothing more than printed words without force of application.[229] Control to him was to eventually use the masses to engage the bourgeoisie in open civil war.[230]

Kamenev understood the dangers of Lenin's position; the party leader's policies had all the hallmarks of Jacobinism because the masses were not behind them.[231] He had said it when Trotsky had proposed 'permanent revolution' in 1906, and he was saying it now. He was willing to concede that Lenin's views could be used as their 'maximum' policy, but without concrete steps he worried the party would continue to vacillate as it had during the 'April Crisis' when the left-wing of the party had protested with the masses calling for the downfall of the Provisional Government.[232] Lenin had reversed course by urging revolutionary restraint, but that had only served to disorganize the party due to mixed messages.[233] V.V. Kuraev summed up the issue by stating that a tragedy similar to the fate of the Paris Commune would follow if they successfully seized power without a plan.[234]

Kamenev worried what the result would be if they led an immature proletariat to revolution, stating on 24 April that Lenin was 'boycotting the revolutionary process'. This was a brief reference to his Lassallean contention that only with a culturally and politically developed

[228] Ibid., p. 68.
[229] Ibid., p. 94.
[230] Ibid., p. 95-96.
[231] Ibid., p. 82.
[232] Ibid., p. 86.
[233] Ibid., p. 86.
[234] Ibid., p. 99.

working class could they push for revolution. It was so important to him that he threatened to leave the party announcing that 'if this path is offered to me to go to the socialist revolution in an airplane, then I will refuse, because in that case I will go alone' and continued that he wanted 'to go to the socialist revolution with the masses'.[235] His message was clear.

Lenin was dangerously close to heading down the path of Jacobinism. Lenin himself said their immediate aim was not socialism, but taking power.[236] Even though Leopold Haimson has pointed out that Lenin desired 'to take steps forward' for the 'second stage' of the revolution,[237] Lenin had completely failed to outline just what those steps were. Kamenev had devised practical policy to rally workers to press for peace to hopefully spark revolution in Germany, whereas Lenin had provoked other parties with his vision for a future government of soviets and about raising international civil war in Russia without outlining how the party was to achieve those aims. Discussing taking power in a Jacobean fashion to realise policy was not a practical step, and it did not correspond with Kamenev's belief that the state was to be a reflection of proletarian values. Kamenev thought social transformation would come first, political power second. Politics had always been the primary tool in which Kamenev hoped to bring the proletariat to consciousness, but he had never seen it as an end in itself. With Lenin politics and power came first, and reality had to bend to meet the image he created.

Kamenev understood that Lenin had realigned the party. The Bolsheviks were no longer dedicated to raising the consciousness of the proletariat for revolution, but instead were a party intent on gaining political power to only then uplift the proletariat. That was why Lenin

[235] Ibid., p. 110.
[236] Leopold H. Haimson, *Russia's Revolutionary Experience, 1905-1917: Two Essays*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005, p. 33.
[237] *Sed'maya (aprel'skaya) vserossiiskaya konferentsiya RSDRP (bol'shevikov): protokoly*, p. 34.

advocated the party separate the 'communist elements of the proletariat from the petty-bourgeois ones'[238]; he desired a resolute proletarian base for the party to take action. Kamenev remained interested in winning the 'petty-bourgeois' ones to their side. By reducing the role of the peasantry, his proposal to seize state power and wait for aid from abroad was becoming far more similar to Trotsky's theory of 'permanent revolution' rather than the pre-1917 Bolshevik position.

At the conference Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' once again resurfaced as he was successfully able to forge a compromise. Kamenev's criticism of Lenin's policies steered the party to accept Lenin's *April Theses* as its 'maximalist' policy. Kamenev hoped this would prevent the party left from trying to take action immediately by officially placing Lenin's ideas as a distant goal. This placated those such as Kamenev, Nogin, and Miliutin who worried that seizing power was terribly premature. The conference decided that the newly elected Central Committee would draw up a 'minimum' program in two months' time and present it at the next party congress.[239] To further moderate Lenin's 'maximalist' ideas, Nogin had allied with Kamenev to question Lenin's 'All Power to the Soviets' policy and the establishment of a government of soviets. Nogin maintained that the Soviets themselves would be reduced to municipal management or even become obsolete once the future Constituent Assembly determined the mode of government.[240] Lenin therefore resigned himself to note in the resolution on 'the revision of the party program' that it was only important to know the class characteristics of the government rather than its actual form.[241] Lenin's proposal to change the Bolsheviks to the

[238] Ibid., p. 33.
[239] Ibid., p. 258.
[240] Ibid., p. 102.
[241] Ibid., p. 196.

'Communist Party' and to create the 'Third International' was also rejected on the grounds that building socialism was not yet underway. Nevertheless, in the face of the 'Miliukov note' and the 'Liberty Loan', Lenin had moved the party to accept his divisive Petrograd City Conference resolutions as general Bolshevik policy.

Conclusion

The Bolshevik party had two distinct paths presented to them at the April 1917 Bolshevik conference, and this chapter has presented the origins of how Kamenev arrived at his 1917 position against Lenin. His view that the February Revolution was an 'incomplete' bourgeois revolution originated from his 1916 contentions that in Russia the war had forged an unnatural alliance between bourgeois capitalism and feudalism. Lenin focused his attention on the international working class movement with his analysis that the war signified the final stage of capitalism. While Kamenev had no objections to this model as it applied to Europe, from these differences there emerged an escalating conflict between Kamenev and Lenin as to how to proceed in Russia. The war had radically changed Lenin. He had become militant, and even more obstinate, unbending, and self-assured than before. His monological discourse sharpened and he made enemies of all non-Bolshevik socialists who challenged his principle views. Unity with other socialists could only be achieved if they completely capitulated to his theoretical position. This inflexibility combined with his commitment to revolution and the conquest of power set the foundation for the Bolshevik leadership's resistance to compromise throughout 1917.

Unlike Lenin, Kamenev did not label party opponents 'traitors' for disagreeing, and felt that their future struggle with the bourgeoisie would require the entire 'revolutionary democracy'

and compromise. Lenin's actions and behaviour outweighed his words calling for worker democracy in his *April Theses.* Only by appreciating Kamenev's position can the true importance of Lenin's triumph at the April Conference be completely understood. Gaining the party's trust over the debate with the 'Liberty Loan' enabled Lenin to dramatically shift the party away from their Social-Democratic roots of working with other socialists out of solidarity. Accepting all 'shades of socialism', Kamenev was the leading Bolshevik voice fighting for a more democratic socialist future.

In terms of theoretical direction, Kamenev's Bolshevism remained Social-Democratic. He espoused wanting to advance the proletariat culturally and politically before seizing power. It is evident his inspiration was Lassalle, and this led him to spurn Lenin's vision for a socialist state organised through the soviets on theoretical grounds. Lenin had proposed a fundamental change to the function of a future socialist state and Kamenev and Nogin managed to thwart its becoming accepted as part of the official party platform. The controversy around Lenin's *April Theses* was as much a disagreement over theoretical principle as it was over tactics.

CHAPTER 3

The year 1917 was a tumultuous one. In the beginning the Mensheviks and the SRs dominated the Petrograd Soviet and when in May their two parties joined the Kadets and Octobrists in coalition in the Provisional Government, the two institutions had a much easier political relationship. However, it was not enough to reduce the war weariness setting in among the population, nor did it help in speeding up the convocation of the Constituent Assembly or in resolving the peasant demand for land in the countryside. Soldiers exhausted by the bloody war attempted insurrection in July, and in August General Kornilov organised a military coup to save Russia from extremism. The Bolsheviks were nearly ruined after the July Days, but emerged as the leading force for change following Kornilov's failed coup and seized the majority for the first time in the Petrograd Soviet. Riding on their growing popularity, they organized the overthrow of the Provisional Government in October with promises to resolve the nation's political and economic woes. The role Kamenev played in 1917 was an important one, and understanding his theoretical and political reasons for the actions he undertook at each critical juncture is essential to not only understanding how the Bolsheviks triumphed in 1917, but also what role his 'Bolshevik Centrism' played during the year of the October Revolution.

The 'Old Bolshevik' versus Lenin – In Pursuit of Cooperation

Throughout 1917 there were essentially two prominent contradictory messages emanating from the Bolshevik party, one stressing a desire for socialist unity against the bourgeoisie and the other trumpeting that the Bolsheviks were the only true Marxists and that with or without the support of other socialist parties they were prepared to take power. There were various groups

among the Bolsheviks which shall be enumerated upon, but Kamenev and Lenin best express the two dominant Bolshevik positions. Although the two men and their followers clashed, it was the duality of their contentions that ensured their party's ultimate victory and success of the October Revolution.

There were Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, and Kamenev considered both parties socialist. Lenin's view was increasingly becoming that only the Bolsheviks were socialists. There was thus a struggle between the pre-1914 Bolshevik view that there could be competing socialist ideas between parties which still operated under the unitary mission to bring about a proletariat revolution and Lenin's narrowing worldview that only the Bolsheviks knew the true Marxist path. Lenin thought competing views only served to impede, delay, or outright oppose the oncoming proletariat revolution he envisioned.

From the outset it is possible to discern that Kamenev remained committed to Social-Democracy as a whole. With how closely the right-wing of the Bolsheviks and the left-wing of the Mensheviks were to each other, one might consider that Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' would be better defined as him being a centrist Russian Social-Democrat, but the fact remained that he was committed to promoting revolutionary civil war abroad and was against any and all cooperation with the bourgeoisie, a decidedly Bolshevik feature.

Nevertheless, Kamenev pursued socialist solidarity to a degree which nearly compromised his Bolshevik standing. After the 'April Crisis' and the forced resignation of Foreign Minister Miliukov and the Minister of War, A.I. Guchkovn, on 2 May Chkheidze and

Tsereteli negotiated with Prime Minister Prince G.E. Lvov to create a coalition government.[242] Two Mensheviks and four SRs joined Octobrists and liberal Kadets in the Provisional Government. Both Kamenev and Stalin had entertained the idea that joining the bourgeois ministers could be a more practical way of controlling the government than by constantly negotiating with it through the Soviet.[243] He had anticipated that they would leverage their positions to force the bourgeoisie to adhere to policies emanating from the soviet and to his mind and others such as his Menshevik-Internationalist friend N.N. Sukhanov, if they held a firm position it would not violate Lassallean principles.[244] Kamenev and Stalin's optimism was short-lived as it became immediately apparent that Tsereteli desired sincere cooperation with the bourgeois ministers and refused to denounce the country's war effort.

Three specific examples immediately following the April Conference illustrate how Kamenev and Lenin set different Bolshevik tones in regards to politics for the remainder of 1917. Leading the Bolsheviks in the Workers' section of the Petrograd Soviet, on 10 May Kamenev put forward a compromise proposal that for the municipal elections the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks should run on a united socialist ticket, stressing that they should tell citizens 'not to vote for the list of bourgeois candidates, but choose one of the socialists.'[245] Lenin's mouthpiece, Zinoviev, quickly denounced the Mensheviks and the SRs for cooperating with the bourgeoisie in government and upset the hall.[246] One message was conciliatory, and the other was combative.

[242] Kamenev was also present at the meeting. See Sukhanov, p. 336.
[243] I.G. Tsereteli, *Vospominaniya o fevral'iskoi revolyutsii*, kniga pervaya, Paris: Mouton & Co, 1963, p. 142-143.
[244] Ibid., p. 141.
[245] B.D. Gal'perina and V.I. Startsev, eds., *Petrogradskii Sovet rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov v 1917 godu: Protokoly, stenogrammy i otchety, rezolyutsii i postanovleniya obshchikh sobranii sektsii, zasedanii ispolnitel'nogo komiteta, byuro ispolnitel'nogo komiteta i fraktsii (27 fevralya – 25 oktyabrya 1917 goda)*, vol. 3, Moscow: Rossiiskaya politicheskaya entsiklopediya, 2002, p. 50.
[246] Ibid., p. 36-38.

This created a rather confusing image as to whether the Bolsheviks were friends or foes. In rejecting cooperation, one Soviet representative summed up their difficulties in understanding the Bolshevik's confused statements, declaring that 'the Bolsheviks are not enemies but comrades...,' however, 'they are our enemies during the election campaign.'[247]

The second example is in regards to how Lenin and Kamenev handled socialists abroad. Whereas Kamenev was searching for alliances to achieve Bolshevik ends, Lenin insisted on the party acting independently. For example, Kamenev and Nogin advocated that the Bolsheviks participate in the upcoming Stockholm Conference to try and broker peace between all belligerent powers on the basis of no annexations or indemnities.[248] Kamenev hoped that such a declaration would give strength to his cause in pushing the Provisional Government to ask for peace in an effort to spark revolution in Germany. Lenin refused to open a dialogue with the 'traitors' and with Zinoviev's aid persuaded the CC to boycott the conference. Lenin was so antagonistic to others criticising his views that he unjustly imagined that the internationalist socialist community was in league with the bourgeoisie to forestall a proletarian revolution![249] However, having regained support following the war credits row, Kamenev and Nogin successfully petitioned the CC to allow them to unofficially attend, but the conference never convened.[250]

The third example was in how the two men treated their opponents. Lenin saw his adversaries as irreconcilable enemies, branding them as 'traitors'. Kamenev, on the other hand,

[247] Ibid., p. 50.
[248] Almost all the major powers refused to allow socialists to leave their respective countries to attend the conference. It never met.
[249] Tsereteli, *Vospominaniya o fevral'iskoi revolyutsii*, p. 241.
[250] At the conference there were to be two seats left 'unoccupied' for the Bolshevik delegates. See ibid., p. 292.

was careful not to personally attack other socialists. The most striking example of this tactic was his treatment of Kerensky.[251] In May the Provisional Government issued a 'Declaration of the Rights of Soldiers', which allowed officers to execute insubordinate soldiers in wartime situations despite the abolition of the death penalty. On 14 and 18 May Kamenev attempted to absolve Kerensky of personal responsibility and stated in public that his party did not distrust him but placed the blame on General A.A. Polivanov.[252] Lenin was belligerent and Kamenev was civil.

The Bolshevik party had two conflicting messages to other socialist parties. Channelled through Lenin's position, one brokered no compromises and did its best to exacerbate the divide between them, and the other through Kamenev worked with great effort to keep political channels open in hopes of cooperation.

The June Demonstrations – The Failure of Political Dialogue

The Mensheviks and the Soviet in general ignored Kamenev's early overtures for cooperation. Just as easily as Lenin had hastily branded his opponents as 'traitors', the Soviet majority mistakenly viewed all the Bolsheviks as if they were all as rigid as Lenin. This failure of dialogue from the side of the Soviet leaders cost them not only an important opportunity to change Bolshevik opinion, but strengthened Lenin's hard-line position.

Among the Bolsheviks Kamenev made a substantial gain in winning over Zinoviev from Lenin. Robert Daniels has contended he began to favour Kamenev's position out of spite for being overshadowed by Trotsky when he entered the party in August, but his shift occurred much

[251] Kamenev no doubt owed Kerensky some gratitude for his for his court council in 1915. See chapter 2.
[252] Gal'perina and Startsev, vol. 3, p. 171.

earlier.[253] When Zinoviev became a representative in the Workers' Section of the Petrograd Soviet, he quickly saw the majority's disdain for Lenin's platform and this influenced him to temper his views. Zinoviev had a strong gift for oratory, and when he abandoned Lenin's position Kamenev and Zinoviev became the head of a formidable Bolshevik minority in the Soviet with a strong public presence. Kamenev's line was therefore strengthened at the early June All-Russian Congress of Soviets when the two were elected onto the Executive Committee.[254]

However, within the party the far left was stirring. The Bolshevik Military Organization (BMO) led by K.A. Mekhonoshin, K.N. Orlov, V.I. Nevsky, N.I. Podvoisky, P.V. Dashkevich, and F.F. Raskol'nikov[255] began preparations for a soldier demonstration in opposition to the Provisional Government's proposed military offensive. At the 6 June joint meeting of the CC, the Military Organizations, and the Executive Commission of the Petersburg Committee Lenin, Stalin, Y.M. Sverdlov, and G.F. Fedorov came out in favour of the BMO's protest. Lenin feared that the Provisional Government might be able to bolster its political support with a military victory. Alexander Rabinowitch has shown that this decision was deliberately kept from the congress delegation.[256] No doubt Lenin wanted to safeguard his own position without the interference of Kamenev's political line. This began to unravel when the delegation heard about the news, as Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Nogin quickly formed a strong minority against the protest. Kamenev feared that given the isolation of the Bolsheviks the protests could trigger a revolution

[253] Daniels, p. 48.
[254] Vera Vladimirova, ed., *Revolyutsiya 1917 goda: khronika sobytii*, vol. III, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1924, p. 18.
[255] The organization of the party comprised of party cells from within the military. See Rabinowitch, *Prelude to Revolution,* p. 104.
[256] Rabinowitch, *Prelude to Revolution*, p. 77

bound to fail.[257] This created a rather tense atmosphere in the congress as the Bolshevik decision pitted their party against the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, which on the 8 June had publically prohibited any demonstration without the authorization of the Petrograd Soviet.[258]

Kamenev, Zinoviev, and Nogin were so concerned about defying the will of their fellow socialists that they persuaded the CC to have an emergency meeting at midnight to try to cancel the demonstration. Lenin and Sverdlov chose to abstain over fear of the consequences of seizing power with what they considered an inept Menshevik and SR Soviet majority.[259] Kamenev, Zinoviev, and Nogin won the vote to call off the armed protest to maintain Bolshevik and Soviet unity.[260] The political meaning was for Lenin a retreat, but for Kamenev's group it was a conciliatory display of restraint to their fellow socialists that the Bolsheviks were willing to keep a political dialogue open.

The Executive Committee of the congress took little notice and chose to escalate tensions with the Bolsheviks. This was clearly a mistake as they could have adopted a strategy to leverage Kamenev, Zinoviev, and Nogin against Lenin and the Bolshevik left by promoting and praising their efforts. In a special joint meeting of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd soviet and the Presidium of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, Tsereteli, A.R. Gots, M.I. Liber, and K.M. Ermolaev completely ignored Kamenev's message and moved that the Soviet should disarm the Bolsheviks. Fedor Dan, B.O. Bogdanov, and L.M. Khinchuk were the only ones who understood that a move against the Bolsheviks would alienate sections of the proletariat and be seen as counterrevolutionary. It was rather odd that Tsereteli charged the Bolsheviks with conspiracy for

[257] Ibid., p. 57-59.
[258] Gal'perina and Startsev, vol. 3, p. 289. See also *Golos soldata*, June 10, 1917, p. 3.
[259] David R. Marples, *Lenin's Revolution: Russia 1917-1921,* New York: Pearson Education Limited, 2000, p. 38.
[260] Rabinowitch, *Prelude to Revolution*, p. 77.

not making their intentions public. Sukhanov was right that there was a not 'even a shadow of illegality' in the Bolshevik's action.[261] If anything, by the Bolsheviks yielding it showed loyalty. Kamenev of course was indignant and led the Bolsheviks from the hall in protest.[262]

Tsereteli's remarks struck a sour note with Kamenev for he had struggled within the Bolshevik party to cancel the demonstration, and had even enumerated his difficulties in hopes of showing the party's obedience, and his own, to the Soviet.[263] Instead of relief or praise, he received ridicule. On 11 June the Soviet passed Dan's rather lenient proposal to simply censure the Bolsheviks, but they missed an important opportunity. Had they instead emphasized Kamenev's defiance within his party with more appreciation, they could have gained favour with Bolsheviks contemplating Kamenev's position.

Instead, they helped divide the Executive Committee from the Bolsheviks even further. In a special meeting between the Petersburg Committee and the CC on 11 June, I.T. Smigla and Stalin unsuccessfully tried to resign from the CC over the cancellation. Zinoviev tried to persuade the Petersburg Committee that the climate at the Congress had been so anti-Bolshevik that 'if you had been in our situation you would have voted with us,' but the Petersburg Committee remained hostile.[264] Most endorsed M.P. Tomski's opinion that the party organs had voted for a demonstration knowing of the congress's opposition and therefore found fault with the leadership's decision.[265] The intra-party discord quickly abated as Tsereteli's hysterical attack on Kamenev had made him look to be the very 'counter-revolutionary' Lenin claimed him to be and

[261] Sukhanov, p. 398.
[262] Alexander Fyodorovich Kerensky and Robert Paul Browder, *The Russian Provisional Government, 1917: Documents*, vol. III, Stanford: Stanford Universtiy Press, 1961, p. 1317.
[263] Gal'perina and Startsev, vol. 3, p. 300.
[264] *Pervyi Legal'nyi Peterburgskii komitet bol'shevikov v 1917 g.*, p. 162.
[265] Ibid., p. 160.

thus Lenin and Zinoviev were able to channel party discontent by uniting opinion against Tsereteli.[266] Lenin had labelled his fellow socialists 'traitors' and 'enemies' when they originally were not. With Lenin and the BMO creating the hostile atmosphere, the Bolsheviks truly became the Executive Committee's enemy. The Soviet leaders heard only Lenin's invectives drowning out Kamenev's voice. Their failure to welcome Kamenev's position prevented the party's internal disputes from maturing into a divide, for even the Bolsheviks of Kamenev's persuasion aligned with Lenin, seeing that an open hand of cooperation to the Mensheviks and SRs was pointless.

The July Days – Gaining the Trust of the Petrograd Soviet

The Bolshevik leadership remained hesitant on the question of seizing power. The whole nation was not as militant as Petrograd. Kamenev saw this clearly and sought to curtail the growing militancy of the Bolshevik left by illuminating socialist principles. On 22 June he wrote in *Pravda* that the bourgeois stage of the revolution could not be skipped and implored caution. Lenin soon also called for restraint, but Leopold Haimson has accurately conveyed that he was worried about the ability to hold power, not questioning whether it should be taken or not.[267] The real essence of the dispute between Lenin and Kamenev continued to be that unlike Lenin, Kamenev was interested in taking power only if the new government represented all 'shades of socialism' and had the backing of the masses.

The first overture from Kamenev after the June Demonstration dispute to show his desire for socialist solidarity came the day of the 18 June demonstration. At the Kresty Vyborg prison

[266] Ibid., p. 154-155.
[267] Haimson, *Russia's Revolutionary Experience,* p. 61. See also Rabinowitch, *Prelude to Revolution*, p. 122.

the Anarchist-Communists staged a jail break to free F.P. Khaustov, a Bolshevik editor of the soldiers' paper *Okopnaya Pravda*.[268] Kamenev took action to break up the mob by acceding to the release of four additional political prisoners. He sought to quell the unrest in order to safeguard the Soviet, not just his party.[269] Had it been a Bolshevik affair, the words of a disciplined left Bolshevik would have sufficed much more than Kamenev in calling off the crowd.

Matters between the Bolsheviks and the Soviet began to deteriorate on 3 July when anti-government sentiments within the First Machine Gun Regiment emboldened them to take to the streets of Petrograd in pursuit of a direct overthrow of the Provisional Government. Kamenev quickly sent BMO Raskol'nikov a message instructing him to restrain the Kronstadt sailors.[270] Unable to pacify the movement, the BMO's All-Russian Bureau, the Petersburg Committee's Executive Commission, and CC members Stalin and Sverdlov chose to support the street protests on 3 July.[271]

Trying to prevent Bolshevik isolation and make the best of a bad situation as the regiment approached, Kamenev lost his usual equanimity and jumped up on the tribune at a Petrograd Soviet meeting and with emotional fervour proposed they seize power and elect a bureau of 25 to organize a peaceful transfer of power.[272] The Bolsheviks were sure to be blamed once the sailors were repressed. Therefore Kamenev's actions were not completely altruistic, but he certainly was

[268] He had been arrested 9 June on charges of treason. See Rabinowitch, *Prelude to Revolution*, p. 107.
[269] Vladimirova, vol. III, p. 81.
[270] Rabinowitch, *Prelude to Revolution*, p. 152.
[271] Ibid., p. 161.
[272] B.D. Gal'perina and V.I. Startsev, eds. *Petrogradskii sovet pabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov v 1917 godu: protokoly, stenogrammy i otchety, rezolyutsii i postanovleniya obshchikh sobranii sektsii, zasedanii ispolnitel'noro komiteta, byuro ispolnitel'noro komiteta i fraktsii (27 fevralya – 25 oktyabrya 1917 goda)*, vol. 4, Moscow: Rossiiskaya politicheskaya entsiklopediya, 2003, p. 21.

vocalizing his desire to get Soviet support to save his own party from condemnation. However, it cannot be forgotten that Kamenev had been working for a socialist alliance since his March arrival. He truly wanted a Soviet government with all parties represented. Trotsky's quick acceptance of Kamenev's motion cannot be seen in the same light.[273] Kamenev was consistent. Trotsky, for example, later turned his back on political dialogue once the Bolsheviks gained a Soviet majority.

Proof of Kamenev's sincerity came when despite the representatives of the SRs and the Mensheviks walking out in protest, Kamenev ensured that should the regiment seize power they would be represented in the new government. Confident the unrest was an isolated Bolshevik phenomenon, the Mensheviks and SRs refused to join Kamenev's attempt to expand the gains of a potential revolution from a Bolshevik minority into a far-reaching endorsement by the Soviet. Nevertheless, under Kamenev's leadership the remaining delegates unanimously passed his resolution calling for an all-socialist government with 276 votes. Kamenev instructed the Soviet to only select 15 of the 25 members so that the remaining 10 would be held for the other parties when they returned.[274] The Bolsheviks could have taken every seat. Leaving places open showed a sincere commitment for future cooperation as there was no way of knowing at the time that the commission was never going to meet.

[273] Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution,* vol. 1, trans., Max Eastman. London: The Camelot Press, 1934, p. 536.
[274] The Workers' Section elected Kamenev, Zinoviev, Trotsky, I.I. Zhukov, A.S. Enukidze, I.S. Ashkenazi, I. Ya. Panov, Paleanskii, A.F. Korneev, P.A. Zalyutskii, L.M. Karakhan, Ryazanov, I. Yurenev, V.I. Zof, and S.M. Nakhimson. See Gal'perina and Startsev, vol. 4, p. 23. See also *Pravda,* July 4, 1917, p. 3.

Up to the very end of the July days Kamenev aided the Soviet. In the face of failure, Lenin ordered the BMO to stand down and the CC demanded workers return to work.[275] On behalf of the Central Executive Committee (TsIK) of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets General Lieber brought in Kamenev to aid in retaking the Peter-Paul Fortress from the Kronstadt sailors. Kamenev was successful at pacifying the sailors and the Bolshevik Kronstadt leaders S. Roshal and Raskol'nikov, but his willingness to help the Soviet nearly cost him his life. On the way to Kronstadt the Menshevik M.I. Lieber and the SR A.R. Gots had to intercede to stave off an angry mob intent on murdering him. It was a strange turn of circumstances that the leading Bolshevik leader who championed the position to safeguard the Soviet nearly died at the hands of Soldiers who wanted to execute him for the Bolshevik's endangering its existence.[276]

Kamenev and Lenin on Politics

The positions that Lenin and Kamenev took up following the Provisional Government's 6 July call to immediately arrest all the individuals responsible for the armed demonstration strongly conveyed their divided views on politics. Lenin and Zinoviev chose to go into hiding and labelled the Provisional Government under Kerensky a 'military dictatorship,' arguing that under the present conditions courts were 'but *an episode in the civil war*,' and that those Bolsheviks such as Kamenev, Trotsky, Lunacharsky[277], and Nogin, who were urging him to stand trial simply did not understand the nature of the 'war' and its lengthening duration.[278] To Lenin any questioning of his conduct was tantamount to counter-revolution and by escaping the

[275] Vladimirova, vol. III, p. 149.
[276] See Sukhanov, p. 463, Gal'perina and Startsev, vol. 4, p. 116, and *Izvestiya*, August 9, 1917, p. 9.
[277] Trotsky and Lunacharsky were not arrested until the 23 July and were pushing Lenin towards a public trial without knowing that they themselves would soon be targeted.
[278] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 32, p. 433.

authorities he placed himself above the Soviet's collective judgement; in essence – above politics. He now committed his efforts to planning violent revolution, although it is highly doubtful that he ever gave a peaceful transition of power much consideration. Not wanting to include SRs and Mensheviks in a future government as he now considered their leaders 'the aids of butchers',[279] Lenin proposed a new form of government with a proletariat and peasant powerbase other than the soviets.[280] This is proof that his talk of gaining a party majority in the soviets had always truly been a means to take power rather than any indication he was supporting worker democracy in 1917.

Lenin ran roughshod over any possibility for a true 'revolutionary democracy' in the work he wrote in hiding, *State and Revolution*. Drawing heavily from Marx, Lenin outlined that the future socialist state would be of a commune-type which would 'wither away' as a classless society developed. Lenin contended that politics was simply an outward expression of material self-interest, meaning that if the economic conditions were changed the proletariat in a proletarian state would have no reason for disagreement and thus a proletarian government would have no need for politics.[281] As Marx had written, the only thing the future state would require to maintain cohesion was force and repression; not against the proletariat, but against the bourgeoisie. Two historians that have elaborated on this theme and accurately portrayed Lenin's intentions are Samuel Farber and A.J. Polan. For example, Farber correctly notes that *State and Revolution* focused only on worker administration and made no mention of the 'political processes' necessary to resolve differences of opinion.[282] Likewise, Polan has argued that *State*

[279] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 34, p. 14.
[280] Ibid., p. 12.
[281] A.J. Polan, *Lenin and the end of Politics,* London: Mathuen and Co. LTD, 1984, p. 176.
[282] Samuel Farber, *Before Stalinism: The Rise and Fall of Soviet Democracy*, Oxford: Polity Press, 1990, p. 210.

and Revolution showed Lenin's commitment to ending politics because the government he outlined was without a separation between the government and the people.[283] Either there was going to be an unrealistic general unified will of the proletariat, or force was going to be a necessity to overcome disagreement. Alfred B Evans has skirted the issue by advocating that Lenin was not intending *State and Revolution* to be a socialist roadmap for Russia specifically and was therefore a more theoretical exploration of ideas rather than a political programme of action.[284] James Ryan has argued that Lenin's endorsement of violence in *State and Revolution* has been exaggerated by historians not taking into account when the work was written. In this view Lenin was invigorated by the revolutionary enthusiasm of 1917 and did not envision perpetual repression.[285] These latter two views ignore the fact that Lenin was contemplating this form of government while he was at ideological war with fellow socialists at home and abroad and was in fear of arrest by a socialist backed Provisional Government. Taken in this context, it is impossible to see how Lenin's *State and Revolution* was anything but an unequivocal call to overcome differences of opinion through coercion.

In contrast, Lassalle's advocacy of a permanent socialist republic and not a state 'withering away' showed that Lassalle had desired politics remain to sort out differences of opinion. The use of force as a method to repress the bourgeoisie under proletarian rule was also something Lassalle never advocated. Power and politics were based on privilege, and if the proletariat dominated the republic, repression would be unnecessary because the proletariat's

[283] Polan, p. 14.
[284] Alfred B Evans, *Soviet Marxism-Leninism: The Decline of an Ideology*, Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1993, p. 21.
[285] James Ryan, *Lenin's Terror: The Ideological Origins of Early Soviet State Violence*, London: Routledge, 2012, p. 73-74.

inherent sense of equality would mandate an end to coercion.[286] The state expanded, eventually drawing in everyone to participate. The opinions of other socialists mattered. This Lassallean influence explains why Kamenev invested himself in the current system, participating in the Soviet, conferences, and elections. He chose not to go into hiding because he still valued the authority of the soviets and saw them as more than just a means for revolution. They were part of a gradual transformation to a more proletarian directed state. Just as Lenin and Zinoviev were accused of being German agents, the right-wing press charged Kamenev with being a spy and a former Okhrana agent to tarnish the Bolsheviks.[287] Kamenev allowed himself to be arrested on 9 July. It was a public gesture supporting the Soviet and its pursuit of socialist democracy.

This was made clear in a short letter to Chkheidze a week after his arrest, Kamenev wrote 'I gave myself to justice and have trusted the authority of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies' and its resolutions about "judicial guarantees"…' To the Petrograd Soviet he pleaded that the deputies 'could not surrender their duty of honour to provide their own member the possibility to defend his reputation as a socialist and revolutionary.'

Kamenev even made a veiled swipe at Lenin, stating:

> 'I want to think that the Soviet's behaviour will not force me to recognize that the comrades who failed to submit to the directives of the Soviet acted more reasonably than myself. I turned myself over to the hands of the judicial power

[286] Lassalle, *Printsipy truda v sovremennom obshchestve,* p. 28.

[287] The right-wing newspapers *Rech', Birzhevka, Dnya, Robochaya Gazeta,* and *Den'* tried to derail any attempts to restore Kamenev's prestige and aimed to keep him imprisoned. They had previously targeted Lenin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, other Bolsheviks, and even Chernov throughout July with vicious slanders, and in early August they launched a personal smear campaign again against Kamenev. They accused Kamenev of being a former Okhrana agent. An ex-Tsarist police officer, Balabin, had fingered Kamenev during his own interrogation, alleging that Kamenev joined the secret police in 1908, where upon arrival at a Kiev train station he had been escorted directly to the Okhrana department at Kulyabko. There Kamenev reportedly received 100 rubles, enlisted himself in the Tsar's service, and then returned to Petrograd.

> and agreed to the wishes of the Central Executive Committee. I have waited a week. It is long enough. It is even too long. I demand that I be given the facts which are keeping me in prison as a bribed traitor.'

Zinoviev, Lenin, and later, Trotsky, all wrote letters to justify their positions, but *none of them* vowed any loyalty to the Soviet as Kamenev did. They wrote only to clear their names as German spies.[288]

Kamenev's gesture finally obtained the desired result. His socialist peers came to his aid. Unlike for other Bolsheviks, at the request of Kamenev the Executive Committee opened an investigation as to the veracity of the charges against him. What the Executive Committee discovered was hardly incriminatory. His dealings in Kiev had truly been of a personal nature and he was not a member of the Okhrana.[289] The Soviet then pressured the Provisional Government to release Kamenev on 4 August, but it refused to officially clear his name. In a defiant gesture Kamenev vowed to leave public life until the Executive Committee supported him.[290] This worried Martov who quickly suggested to N.D. Sokolov that he address the public prosecutor personally, and Dan agreed to work through the Justice Department and establish a commission to communicate with the public prosecutor about his case.[291] In the meantime, Kamenev and Lunacharsky protested the allegations in Maxim Gorky's newspaper *Novaya Zhizn'* and in the Moscow based *Sotsial-Democrat* to stir fellow socialist support. This brought conflict between the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet and placed the Soviet in a difficult position;

[288] Vladimirova, vol. III, p. 371.
[289] Kamenev had gone to Kiev in 1908 in part because of hopes of obtaining documents to go abroad, and in part, because of an alarming telegram from his mother. There he failed to acquire the proper documents to depart, and his mother's emergency proved false. His only other encounter with the police that year was when they told him about the murder of his father. See RGASPI 323/1/4/6-8.
[290] Vera Vladimirova, ed., *Revolyutsiya 1917 goda: khronika sobytii*, vol. IV, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1924, p.314.
[291] *Protokoly tsentralnyi komitet: Avgust 1917-Fevral' 1918*, Moscow: Gosudartvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1929, p. 31.

help him and maintain socialist bonds, or not, and discredit themselves before the working class constituency.[292]

Kamenev's plan was a resounding success and therefore Lenin's assessment that the arrests were 'but *an episode in the civil war*' were completely off base. The Executive Committee ruled unanimously that the evidence the Justice Department provided them proved Kamenev's innocence. Dan, Lieber, and Gots[293] signed their names to a declaration on 30 August completely exonerating Kamenev of all charges.[294] It is of great importance to note that his liberators were not left-leaning Mensheviks or Left SRs, but were staunch defencists. This showed that the Mensheviks and the SRs as a whole, not just their left factions, were coming round to the idea of working with the Bolsheviks who were like Kamenev and could be partners in a socialist democratic republic.

Missed Opportunities

At no time after March of 1917 were the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks so close to the possibility of reconciliation than when the two parties effectively banded together to thwart General Lavr Kornilov's attempted military coup on 27 August. Despite Lenin's protestations earlier in the month that there was to be absolutely no cooperation with the Mensheviks or SRs, the Bolshevik CC ignored Lenin's demand and officially advocated joint cooperation on 29 August to halt Kornilov. Their victory had shown the insurmountable strength of socialist unity and fresh from his prison release Kamenev became invigorated with the prospects of a broad Menshevik and SR alliance.

[292] Vladimirova, vol. IV, p. 309-310, 323-324.
[293] Two Mensheviks and an SR.
[294] Vladimirova, vol. IV, p. 137.

The atmosphere had for the moment truly turned in Kamenev's favour against Lenin's divisive message. For one, his cooperation with Martov and the Menshevik-Internationalists was stronger than ever as Martov had come to accept Kamenev's theoretical outlook that the revolution had been an 'incomplete' bourgeois revolution. For reasons explained in the previous chapter, Ziva Galili is wrong to assert that this was Martov's idea.[295] Thus Martov's acceptance of Kamenev's theoretical position helps explain why Lunacharsky had high hopes that Martov's Menshevik-Internationalist group would soon join the Bolsheviks and strengthen the rightist position.[296] Second, Kamenev's 31 August call to form a socialist bloc against the 'conspiracy' of Kornilov and the 'entire' Russian bourgeoisie was not entirely left unanswered.[297] The Mensheviks and the SRs were now officially committed to excluding the Kadets from any future government.[298] In general, political opinion was shifting left. The Socialist Revolutionaries were splitting between right and left, and the Mensheviks were trying to break the left bourgeois liberals from their right Kornilov supporters.[299] Even Dan would soon be courting Martov to form a left bloc.

The Mensheviks, however, were yet unwilling to accept leftist policies partly out of fear of aiding the Bolsheviks to power.[300] Even Kamenev could not allay their concerns when he promised that the Bolsheviks were not plotting a revolution, explaining that 'We never planned a conspiracy and we never will.'[301] Tsereteli and Martov understood that while Kamenev headed

[295] Kamenev had adopted this position before Martov had even entered Petrograd in 1917. See previous chapter and Galili, p. 331.
[296] Daniels, p. 45.
[297] Gal'perina and Startsev, vol. 4, p. 250. See also *Golos Soldata*, September 1, 1917, p. 4.
[298] Galili, p. 381.
[299] V.M. Chernov, *Pered Burei: Vospominaniya*, New York: Chekhov Publishing House, 1953, p. 341
[300] Galili, p. 381.
[301] Gal'perina and Startsev, vol. 4, p. 245.

the conciliatory Bolsheviks, Lenin yet remained and the question of an outright alliance was extremely difficult to contemplate. The most damning roadblock that persisted was Tsereteli and Skobelev's insistence on seeking a coalition among the bourgeois intelligentsia. In vain Kamenev tried to change their opinion as this was something every Bolshevik abhorred. However, many like Tsereteli were more concerned with the principles of democracy than their power base, believing that any future government would need peasants, workers, and bourgeoisie alike. This position was contentious as the vast majority of workers wished to abandon the bourgeoisie. Tsereteli stubbornly pushed this platform throughout September, but the attempted military coup had radicalised views to such a degree that a Bolshevik resolution linking the entire bourgeoisie with Kornilov was approved by the Soviet by 227 votes to 115 with 51 abstentions.[302] Kamenev hoped, as he had when working with the Mensheviks in the Duma before 1917, that the masses would compel the Mensheviks and the SRs to change their direction.

There existed a brief opportunity for a broad coalition of socialists if the Mensheviks had simply cast aside the bourgeoisie. Had the two parties come together Kamenev would have headed the centre-left of an expanded party, and Martov the centre-right. United, their centrist position could have found common ground and maintained a level of parity with their opponents, if not held a Social-Democratic majority against Lenin's far left and Tsereteli's far right. This possibility never gained traction because Martov refused to aid the Bolsheviks with Lenin in their ranks. With the two parties remaining divided, the moderates in both organisations struggled for supremacy. In essence, the fear of Lenin would in the end cost the Mensheviks and SRs credibility and power.

[302] One reason for their success was the absence of many SR delegates from the Soldiers' Section. The SR delegates who were present abstained. See Gal'perina and Startsev, vol. 4, p. 245.

The person who was far more astute than his peers and used the general shift to the left to his advantage was Lenin. Since May Lenin had wanted to accept Trotsky and his fellow Interdistrictites into the party, but that had not happened until the VI Part Congress in early August while Trotsky remained in prison.[303] After Trotsky's release, he strengthened Lenin's position. T.H. Rigby has correctly argued that Lenin always strove 'for the minimum winning alliance consistent with the maximum commitment to his goals, scorning wide coalitions that would confuse objectives and dilute organisational control…'[304] That was why he needed Trotsky, he had to compromise almost nothing.

Inside the Bolshevik party the balance of forces began to tip towards Lenin. Kamenev sensed this and tried to force the hand of the Mensheviks and the SRs on 9 September to be more accommodating when he proposed that the composition of the Presidium be based on proportionality to represent the entire 'revolutionary democracy'.[305] Martov seconded Kamenev's proposal. In an effort to prevent the Bolshevik motion, the SR S.L Vainshtein proposed a resolution of confidence in the then current Presidium of Chkheidze, Tsereteli, Skobelev, Chernov, V.A. Anisimov, Dan, and Gots.[306] It failed. Resisting the Bolshevik conciliators proved disastrous to their credibility as the Bolsheviks secured a majority in support of Kamenev's resolution and became the Soviet majority.[307]

Had Kamenev only desired power for his party alone and had not had a sincere belief in a socialist democracy, he most certainly would not have strained his efforts to diminish the

[303] Daniels, *The Conscience of the Revolution*, p. 45-46.
[304] T.H. Rigby, *Lenin's Government: Sovnarkom 1917-1922*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1979, 155.
[305] Gal'perina and Startsev, vol. 4, p. 324.
[306] Five Mensheviks and two SRs.
[307] Gal'perina and Startsev, vol. 4, p. 324.

Bolshevik triumph in the Soviet in favour of a more balanced 'revolutionary democracy' afterwards. Approved in the Soviet and supported by Kamenev, Tsereteli had proposed a conference to be convened to create a new advisory government body to ensure the defence of the country.[308] At the conference Kamenev sought to ingratiate himself with his opponents by using the pronoun 'we' to include the Bolsheviks in the Menshevik and SR mistake of not seizing Soviet power in February,[309] and even spared Kerensky by insisting that his criticisms of the government were 'not issues of personal trust towards Kerensky…but about trust for the political system'.[310] Astonishingly, since the Bolsheviks were now the dominate party in the Soviet, Kamenev then proposed a resolution which would have placed the Bolsheviks in a government *minority* given the Menshevik and SR dominated conference, saying:

> 'The only way out is this: the power must not be a coalition government; the power must pass into the hands of the democracy (applause), not to the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, but into the hands of the democracy, which is quite fully represented here today. The government must be formed here. Here, too, a body must be nominated to which this government will be responsible (applause)...'[311]

Kamenev was not just accommodating his opponents; he was acting in defiance of Lenin and Trotsky's line, ignoring their supported slogan of 'All Power to the Soviets' which would have given a Bolshevik *majority* in a new government. This showed Kamenev's willingness to sacrifice his party for the better socialist good.

Again, the blame for a failure to form a grand socialist alliance in government came from the Mensheviks, who flatly refused to be allies even if they held the majority. Two main reasons

[308] Ibid., p. 335.
[309] Ibid., p. 346, 360.
[310] *Rabochii Put*, September 17, 1917, p. 2-3.
[311] Kerensky and Browder, vol. III, p. 1682.

held them back. Firstly they feared that Lenin would try the impossible and attempt to implement socialism immediately once in power, and secondly, despite the leftward shift of the proletariat and their demise in the Soviet, they remained unwilling to abandon the bourgeoisie. Before the conference Dan had stubbornly rejected reconciliation, saying 'Kamenev talked about a new programme, but I must declare to you that such a program is not worth a penny if it does now unite the entire conscious democracy', meaning the bourgeoisie.[312] Then at the conference with the same unshakeable rigidness, Tsereteli clung to the idea of a bourgeois coalition despite the final vote on the matter rejecting such cooperation 183 to 813 with 80 abstentions.[313] The Mensheviks were afraid of the responsibility of power and the risk of losing it.

The party divides - Lenin, Trotsky and the moderate Bolsheviks

With both the general leftward shift and Trotsky's unabashed support of Lenin's militant line on seizing power and making former socialist allies enemies, Kamenev's platform of conciliation and cooperation began to seriously wane in the party. Party members were tired of trying to placate their Menshevik and SR counterparts and wanted action. The Bolshevik debate around participation in the pre-parliament marked the turning point. On 21 September the Bolshevik CC voted 9 to 8 not to enter the pre-parliament on the grounds that it included Kadets. Trotsky's group, which included Stalin, was in favour of boycotting the pre-parliament. Supporting Kamenev, Rykov proposed they attend. Petrograd workers were more militant than outside the capital and the Bolshevik CC had long been determining policy based on their views. However, due to a large number of Bolsheviks assembled in Petrograd for the Democratic

[312] Gal'perina and Startsev, vol. 4, p. 346, 360.
[313] Ibid., p. 381.

Conference, the far left line was now outnumbered by Bolsheviks from the countryside who backed Kamenev. He and Rykov were therefore able to pressure the CC to conduct a party vote similar to a party congress. The party voted 77 to 50 for participation.[314] Despite Trotsky and Lenin's protestations, dialogue with the Mensheviks and SRs was still on the table, but barely.

Inside the Petrograd Soviet Bolshevik popularity continued and on 25 September the Bolsheviks secured an Executive Committee majority in Soviet elections and Trotsky became its chair. This was a monumental shift in support of Lenin's line because without Trotsky it seems unlikely that any other Bolshevik could have exceeded Kamenev and Zinoviev's Soviet influence with Lenin remaining in hiding. Yet their importance persisted, and they were able to pass a resolution charging the upcoming Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets to peacefully resolve the issue of revolutionary power.[315]

Lenin was furious. Whilst Kamenev, Nogin, Ryazanov, Sokol'nikov, and others clung to hopes of socialist cooperation, Lenin wrote on 23 September that workers needed 'those at the *top*' of the party to take action, for he had 'not any kind of doubt that at the "top" of our party there are noticeable vacillations that may become *ruinous*… we must uphold the correct line of the party…' and continued that 'not all is well with the "parliamentary" leaders of our Party…'[316] By use of this word 'parliamentary' Lenin was comparing the Kamenev supporting Bolsheviks to liberals, drawing battle lines within his own party. Lenin wrote 29 September that it was no longer possible 'to "wait" for the Congress of Soviets' for that 'would be *complete idiocy*, or

[314] *Protokoly tsentralnyi komitet: Avgust 1917-Fevral' 1918,* p. 65.
[315] Ibid., p. 407. See also *Izvestiya*, September 26, 1917, p. 5-6.
[316] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 34, p. 263.

utter treason,' and if he did not get his way he would resign from the CC and reserve his right 'to agitate among the *rank and file* of the party and at the Party Congress.'[317]

For Kamenev's political line to hold, the Mensheviks and the SRs had to be willing to abandon the bourgeoisie. Despite the popular mood and a growing number of their rank and file supporting such a move, the leadership refused. They were oblivious to the fact that their survival depended on yielding to public pressure. Their stubbornness gave Lenin a mandate to pursue his agenda. At a meeting of the Bolshevik CC on 5 October Kamenev was the only member to vote for participation in the pre-parliament, the rest condemned it as a bourgeois institution. It took his threat of resignation from the TsIK of the Soviet to force the CC to then reconsider the boycott.

He and Ryazanov proposed that the party should wait for an issue to develop within the new body between themselves and the right before they left in protest. This would serve once again to try and win over the Mensheviks, the SRs, and other petty-bourgeois elements by making the bourgeoisie the true enemy, but Kamenev could no longer maintain the majority in the face of outside Menshevik stubbornness. Trotsky, therefore, supported by a small majority won the debate in favour of a boycott[318] and on 7 October effectively displayed the party's disgust with the Provisional Government and its socialist ministers by walking out of the pre-parliament in protest.[319] The Mensheviks failed to see that the Bolshevik boycott of the regime's democratic institutions was tantamount to a complete rejection of political dialogue. Kamenev's year-long policy to bridge the Menshevik and Bolshevik divide was on its last legs.

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[317] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 34, p. 282-283.
[318] Trotsky later gloated that upon defeat 'Kamenev, the irreplaceable propagandist, the experienced political instructor of the party… gloomily retired into the shadows.' See Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 926.
[319] Sukhanov, p. 537-539.

Revolution

The crux of Kamenev's disagreement with Lenin and his push for revolution at the secret 10 October CC meeting came from his belief that a divided 'revolutionary democracy' could not achieve victory. His opposition stemmed from his Lassallean view on the development of society and on the tactical disadvantage of the Bolsheviks acting alone. Supported at the meeting only by Zinoviev,[320] Kamenev argued that there were two tactics emerging; one of conspiracy and one of belief in the inevitability of revolution.[321] Their disagreement was really a continuation of their April 1917 dispute, as his calling Lenin's proposal a 'conspiracy' was a masked attack on Lenin as being a Jacobin for proposing what Kamenev considered a premature revolution. When he wrote to various Bolshevik organizations on 11 October that a revolution staged by the Bolsheviks without their socialist allies would 'push the petty-bourgeoisie into the embrace of Miliukov *for a long time*', it was because he felt the proletariat had not culturally or politically advanced enough to win the peasantry over to their side. The majority had heard this all before and spurned it as they had done previously in the year and backed Lenin.

Kamenev and Zinoviev tried to halt Lenin within the party again at the 16 October CC meeting when Lenin and Trotsky failed to outline precisely how they were going to achieve their revolutionary aims. Tactically Kamenev and Zinoviev felt that the petty-bourgeois group was so large that it would be impossible for the working class alone to overcome the opposing loyal forces of Kerensky. To further their strategic disadvantage, they contended that the Bolsheviks inability to infiltrate the railroad and telegraph unions too serious to overlook. Further, Kamenev

[320] Both Rykov and Nogin, potential Kamenev supporters, were absent from the meetings.
[321] *Protokoly tsentralnyi komitet: Avgust 1917-Fevral' 1918,* p. 93-105.

stressed, their relationship with the soldiers was fragile and talk of revolutionary war was enough to drive them away from the Bolshevik camp. Trying to forge a compromise, Kamenev urged they seize power another way. They argued that the Bolshevik majority in the Soviets was enough to outweigh the expected SR majority in the future Constituent Assembly, meaning that they could peacefully take power.[322] Kamenev's point was rather salient. The Bolsheviks were increasingly gaining support. Time was on their side. The numerous failed Bolshevik attempts to compromise with the Mensheviks had done much to win over Menshevik supporters now disgusted with their own party's adherence to the bourgeoisie. Kamenev felt this was his last chance. He genuinely believed in socialist democracy, and in nearly everything he had done up to this point in his life he had searched for compromises to work together with political opponents.

Yet despite the concerns over their chances of victory, Lenin's resolution to prepare for revolution passed by 20 votes to 6, with 3 abstentions**.** Zinoviev's resolution urging the postponement of insurrection until the Second Congress of Soviets failed 6 to 15, with 3 abstentions. Dismayed, Kamenev submitted his resignation to the CC 20 October, accepted on a vote of 3 to 5.[323]

Kamenev pinned his hopes on agitating among the rank and file to change the party's course.[324] Knowing the provinces far less militant than Petrograd, Kamenev aimed to rally non-Petrograd Bolshevik delegates arriving for the Second Congress of Soviets to overturn the CC's

[322] Ibid., p. 87-92.
[323] Ibid., p. 93-105.
[324] This was a tactic Lenin had used when he had found himself in the minority in April. Lenin's published *April Theses* had been in defiance of the Bureau of the Central Committee's decisions from February, and his general practice of writing letters and cajoling party members had influenced rank and file members at a Bolshevik city conference in Kiev to reject their local central committee's directive to support the pre-parliament. See Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 34, p. 423-427.

decision. This was a viable strategy. Richard Pipes has shown that the majority of Bolsheviks in Moscow supported Kamenev and Zinoviev over Lenin and Trotsky.[325] The Bolsheviks from the provinces were less radical, and many were supporters of Kamenev's previous plan in favour of pre-parliament participation.[326]

There was too much at stake for Kamenev to remain solely within the party rank and file. His socialist conscience compelled him to do more to thwart what he believed a premature revolution. On 18 October in an interview with the editors of *Novaya Zhizn'* Kamenev insinuated that the Bolsheviks were preparing an uprising to derail his party's efforts. Lenin responded furiously, condemning both Kamenev and Zinoviev as 'strike-breakers' and 'blacklegs' demanding that their 'treacherous' behaviour and 'grave betrayal' result in their expulsion from the party.[327] This was not just a result of pique but reflected Lenin's intolerance of dissent. The party was not yet completely under Lenin's sway and the leadership was reluctant to completely disregard Kamenev and Zinoviev's position. Thus on 20 October the CC censured Kamenev and Zinoviev, but did not expel them.[328]

On 18 October Trotsky was forced to announce in the Petrograd Soviet that there was not an imminent insurrection planned; a complete lie. Kamenev seized the opportunity and declared that he wished 'to sign his name to Trotsky's every word.' This put Trotsky in an awkward position as it publically made him appear to be against an uprising.[329] In a Soviet session on 23 October the Menshevik-Internationalist I.S. Astrov criticised Trotsky's tactics and the Bolshevik

[325] Pipes, p. 501.
[326] Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 995.
[327] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 34, p. 419-422.
[328] Stalin had been one of their chief defenders, arguing that party unity was vital. See *Protokoly tsentralnyi komitet: Avgust 1917-Fevral' 1918,* p. 107. See also Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 34, p. 419-422.
[329] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 34, p. 419. See also Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 1011.

aspirations to break with the 'revolutionary democracy', announcing that 'the leaders of the Bolsheviks want to wash their hands in the blood of soldiers and workers, which will undoubtedly spill… Kamenev sits here and confirms the correctness of my information.'[330] Clearly Kamenev was sounding out non-party allies against the Bolshevik CC majority. Even on the eve of the revolution 24 October, Kamenev was working with Ya.K. Berzin to rally support from Left SRs.

The success of Kamenev's manoeuvring can be seen in viewing the formation of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets on 25 October. Alexander Rabinowitch has shown that it was the success of the moderates and their belief in a peaceful transition to an all-socialist government that prompted Kerensky to shuffle more loyal troops into the capital on the eve of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets. This made Lenin's revolution possible due to the Bolsheviks capitalising on the fear of Kerensky's troops. The Military Revolutionary Committee seized power quickly to avoid confrontation.[331] Therefore, without Trotsky and Lenin there would have been no Bolshevik revolution, but without Kamenev their justification for taking power would have been far less justifiable.

Although the Bolsheviks had triumphed, the congress itself was willing to find compromise a final time. The composition of the Presidium of the Second All-Russian Congress was composed of 14 Bolsheviks, 7 Left SRs, 3 Mensheviks, and 1 Menshevik-Internationalist. Although the Bolsheviks held the clear majority, those closest to Lenin's view were outnumbered. This was no doubt a strategy to limit Menshevik and SR protest. The bulk of the

[330] Gal'perina and Startsev, vol. 4, p. 565.
[331] Alexander Rabinowitch, 'Umerennye bol'sheviki v oktyabre 1917 goda', *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 11.129, 2008, p. 340.

Kamenev group, Zinoviev, Ryazanov, Nogin, and Rykov represented the Bolsheviks.[332] Lenin and Trotsky were not in the Presidium, and the Bolsheviks put the best and most eager to promote socialist democracy at the head of the congress. This revealed that the majority of the Bolsheviks still wanted to cooperate with other socialist parties. As he best represented the party's desire for socialist reconciliation, the multi-party congress elected Kamenev chair.

For reasons similar to their refusal to join Kamenev during the July Days; out of fear of failure and of their repugnance to Lenin, the Mensheviks and SRs refused to cooperate and walked out in protest claiming that they could not tolerate the fact that the Bolshevik uprising was predetermining the congress in advance. Not having changed their position to the Bolsheviks in general since Lenin's early 1917 return, the fact they closed off dialogue with the Bolsheviks is of no great surprise.

The 'policy of Kamenev has to stop'

On 27 October 61 Bolsheviks, 29 Left SRs, 6 Menshevik-Internationalists, and 4 various other left socialist parties were elected to the new TsIK of the congress with Kamenev as chair, technically making him head of the government ruling Russia and its first president. With a decisive Bolshevik majority the congress passed a resolution establishing a provisional revolutionary government, known as the Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom). Lenin was its chairman, Trotsky headed foreign affairs, and various leading Bolsheviks assumed all other posts.

[332] Marc Ferro, *October 1917: A social history of the Russian Revolution*, trans., N. Stone, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980, p. 255.

Surprising to many observers at the time was that Kamenev and Zinoviev were not part of the general makeup. Although Lenin was bitter over their attempt to derail the revolution, this explanation alone does not suffice. Kamenev was not without influence or power. Sovnarkom was just one executive body competing with the TsIK and the Military Revolutionary Committee at the time. The party needed his moderation in a government body with a third of its composition being non-Bolshevik.

If Kamenev's 1917 'Bolshevik Centrism' and its commitment to compromise were to ever have become a lasting feature of a socialist Russia, it was at the outset of revolution when on 27 October the Union of Railway Workers (Vikzhel) declared that they would strike unless every member of the 'revolutionary democracy' was represented in a new government, excluding the bourgeoisie. Kamenev could not have been more pleased, announcing that he was 'glad that the railwaymen's union resolution recognizes the fact that the government of the coalition with the bourgeoisie has collapsed.'[333] Kamenev's policy to hold Social-Democrats together was on the verge of being revived from its political graveyard. He therefore used his power within the TsIK to open a new dialogue between socialist parties between the 29 and 31 October in the hopes of establishing an all-socialist government. Even though it was to be provisional as he still believed the Constituent Assembly would establish the framework for the socialist government, it was the first step to bringing the 'revolutionary democracy' together.

Lenin was committed to ensuring no coalition take place without complete capitulation to their party's views. In fact, Leonard Shapiro has shown that Lenin wanted to use the coalition

[333] John L. H. Keep, trans., ed., *The Debate on Soviet Power: Minutes of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets: Second Convocation, October 1917-January 1918*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979, p. 46.

talks simply to mask their covert military manoeuvres to keep power.[334] The general consensus among historians, the present author included, is that the three CC appointed negotiators with Vikzhel, Kamenev, G.Ya. Sokol'nikov and Ryazanov, had no idea it was a ruse.[335] Ryazanov and Kamenev's reactions at the meeting certainly proved their sincerity for coalition. During the talks the Mensheviks and the SRs insisted that there could only be a coalition government if it excluded Lenin and Trotsky. Ryazanov exploded. He understood this was their last chance for cooperation. He was in such an agitated state that the SR S. An-skii complained to Kamenev that he was unable to speak with him. Kamenev declared 'we both are the most moderate of our party, for our comrades are more left than us. *They reject any compromises*. We have to fight on two fronts'[336] (emphasis added). As they were not trying to deceive anyone, their continuation of the talks signified that Kamenev, Sokol'nikov, and Ryazanov were all prepared to abandon Lenin and Trotsky if it meant uniting the 'revolutionary democracy'.

Kamenev proved a successful party negotiator. By 31 October a compromise was reached that would have given the Bolsheviks half the ministry posts and excluded right-wing parties from any future government; the very thing Kamenev had long for advocated. The talks had come to an agreement that the new government body was to consist of 100 TsIK members, 75 members of the Peasants' Soviet, 100 delegates from the Petrograd and Moscow city Dumas, 15 members of Vikzhel, and 20 members representatives of the All-Russian Trade Union, all of which were to be bound to a policy of pursuing immediate peace and a redistribution of land to

[334] Schapiro, p. 73.
[335] To list a few, see Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917*, p. 249, Swain, *The Origins of the Russian Civil War*, p. 55, Schapiro, p. 73, and Daniels, p. 65.
[336] S. An-skii, 'Posle perevorota 25 oktyabrya 1917 gode', *Oktyabr'skaya Revolutsiya: Memuary,* ed., S. A. Alekseev, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1926, p. 302.

the peasantry. This was the ideal working framework in which Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' would have been able to forge compromise among dissent to determine state policy.

With strong support in the soviets the Bolshevik CC majority saw their strength as a political mandate and sided with Lenin to reject coalition on 1 November. First of all, the idea that Lenin and Trotsky would not hold prominent positions in the new government did not sit well with the leadership. Kamenev had helped ensure that neither would Kerensky, but it was not enough. Trotsky and Lenin were immovable. The former insisted the Bolsheviks needed not half, but 75 percent of the ministries. This would have made the coalition a farce, not granting the opposition enough strength to challenge any Bolshevik policy. A government that was only 50 percent Bolshevik would have had to make alliances, the very thing Lenin and Trotsky were unwilling to do in 1917. Lenin demanded that the 'policy of Kamenev has to stop', Vikzhel had to be barred from the Soviets, and the party's attention had to be placed on routing loyal Provisional Government troops. He now declared Vikzhel an enemy, branding them as allies of Kornilov. Lenin's response was testament to his unbending intolerance. The CC agreed and forbade further talks.[337]

Defying his CC, Kamenev utilized his position as chair of the TsIK to continue Vikzhel negotiations. Kamenev, Zinoviev, Ryazanov, Rykov, Nogin, and Miliutin remained a strong minority within the party pursuing a coalition government and together began voting against Bolshevik resolutions in the TsIK.

[337] *Protokoly tsentralnyi komitet: Avgust 1917-Fevral' 1918,* p. 124-128.

True to form, Lenin cast them as his enemies. He wrote 2 November 'that every attempt to compel our Party to refuse power is treason to the cause of the proletariat'.[338] Lenin took no responsibility and placed sole blame for the failure of a coalition government on the Left SRs, whose platform on the peasantry they had accepted wholesale. In response, Kamenev, Rykov, Miliutin, Zinoviev, and Nogin resigned from the CC, stating in a signed letter that they could not lead the party into its own destruction by refusing any agreement with the other socialist parties. The dissenting Bolsheviks joined the chorus of Mensheviks and SRs challenging the Bolshevik government's legitimacy. Lenin issued a rejoinder that 'only enemies of the people, only from enemies of Soviet power can come declarations that this Bolshevik government is *not* a Soviet government.'[339] The words 'enemies of the people', which had not been used to label the 'traitors' of the Second International now blanketed anyone not accepting an all-Bolshevik government, including fellow Bolsheviks. Lenin's monologism within his own party was reaching a near dictatorial pitch. The only success Kamenev had was that his joint protest with Zinoviev, Rykov, Miliutin, and Nogin resulted in the Bolsheviks inviting the Left SRs to form a coalition government.

The Bolshevik minority proved so resistant that the CC forced Kamenev to resign as chair of the TsIK 8 November and installed the Lenin-devoted Stalin to bring the opposition to heel. This was one of the first actions in which the Bolshevik CC trammelled democracy in a non-party institution. Kamenev had not been appointed chair, he had been elected. The Bolshevik party was indeed beginning to substitute itself for the government. Upset with the manoeuvre, the Left SR B.F. Malkin stated that Kamenev's removal was 'an indication of impermissible pressure on the

[338] Lenin, *PSS,* vol. 35, p. 47.
[339] Ibid., p. 73.

part of the Bolshevik fraction, and therefore the Left SRs will vote against any other candidate.'[340] Evidence suggests that not only did the Left SRs vote against his removal en bloc, but that Bolsheviks who opposed the decision absented themselves from the TsIK meeting in solidarity with Kamenev the day the Bolsheviks proposed Sverdlov replace him.[341] Sverdlov, handpicked by Lenin for his strict obedience and ability, was elected chair by a small margin, 19 votes to 14, and as Charles Duval has well documented, was soon thereafter doing Lenin's bidding by shutting down all public debate in favour of Sovnarkom.[342]

'Bolshevik Centrism' in 1917

A theoretical duality had existed among the Bolsheviks between the dialogical 'Old Bolsheviks' adhering to the premise that 'shades of socialism' existed and could work together under the umbrella of Social-Democracy to achieve collective aims, and the Leninist adherents, who believed that only they knew the true Marxist path to revolution and socialism and were prepared to make enemies of other socialists proffering alternatives. Kamenev's line had originated from the Bolsheviks of pre-1914, where although acting independently they had never considered their fellow socialists 'enemies'. Lenin's abrupt turn in 1914 with the war had transformed his worldview and how he viewed opponents. Those in disagreement were branded 'traitors' to socialism. Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' in 1917 was still Bolshevik, but of a different time. Rykov, Nogin, Sokol'nikov, Zinoviev, and Miliutin were similar to Kamenev in that they had not come to terms with Lenin's new Bolshevism which shunned politics. As Kamenev's policy continually failed throughout 1917, Lenin's line grew in supremacy as a direct

[340] Keep, p. 100.
[341] Ibid., p. 312.
[342] See Charles Duval, 'Yakov M. Sverdlov and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets (VTsIK): A Study in Bolshevik Consolidation of Power', *Soviet Studies*, 31.1, 1979.

result of those failings revealing the unwillingness of other parties to cooperate with the Bolsheviks. By the close of the year Kamenev's line was in tatters, as the only compromise he had won the whole year was to invite the SRs into a coalition government.

The primary reason for the failure of Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' in 1917 was not in its own trappings, but in its inability to overcome the negative impact of Lenin's total abandonment of politics. Lenin had used every opportunity to brand the other socialists as 'traitors' or of 'betraying' socialism when they disagreed with his views. His actions towards other socialists negatively overshadowed Kamenev's numerous political overtures. There was in essence an odd tug of war between messages emanating from the Bolsheviks; one of conciliation and the other of flat out animosity, and this confused their opponents. The Mensheviks and the SRs therefore missed numerous opportunities to divide the Bolsheviks by supporting the Kamenev group. They rebuked him for preventing the June Demonstration, refused to support him in the July Days, dismissed his calls to establish a new government in which the Bolsheviks would have been a minority, and abandoned his message for continued cooperation after Kornilov's failed coup.

Kamenev did have some successes in 1917. He had led the Bolsheviks to find a joint platform with the Menshevik-Internationalists in March at the All-Russian Conference of Soviets, and to come to terms with Vikzhel for an all-socialist government, but these efforts were undone by Lenin. The Bolshevik party had changed to be monological, and at the beginning of the world's first socialist government Kamenev found himself an outsider, expelled from the very Soviet institution he had sat in prison to defend.

CHAPTER 4

The period of civil war, 1918-1921, saw the consolidation of the Bolshevik system in the face of the internal armed opposition of the White forces allied to foreign intervention. The civil war saw the inauguration of the first attempt at creating a socialist economy – War Communism. This was a period of frenzied debate within the Communist Party – the emergence of the Left Communists, the Democratic Centralists and the Workers' Opposition. With the ending of the civil war came the eruption of internal unrest – the peasant revolt on the Volga, the industrial strike movement in the winter of 1920-1, and the revolt of the Kronstadt naval base. These events placed the very survival of the Soviet regime in question. In this chapter we explore how Kamenev responded to these developments, examining his role in shaping the foreign policy of the Soviet government and its domestic policies. In a period of extremes the notion of 'Bolshevik Centrism' was something that was to be severely tested.

In Hopes of Coalition Abroad

Alexander Rabinowitch has shown how Lenin unsuccessfully pushed for Kamenev, Zinoviev, Ryazanov, and Y. Larin to be ejected from the party for their rebellious transgressions,[343] and although the CC felt Lenin too extreme, Kamenev's commitment to a socialist coalition democracy was close to moving beyond the pale of what defined the monological Bolshevik position of the October Revolution. Sensing his own inability to make headway from within the party he resigned from the CC on 4 November.[344] Geoffrey Swain has well illustrated that to solidify their hold on power the CC further retaliated against Kamenev and

[343] Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks in Power: The First Year of Soviet Rule in Petrograd,* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007, p. 39.
[344] RGASPI 323/2/102/6.

forced him to resign as a contributor to *Izvestiya*, to leave his post as chair of TsIK, and to abdicate his responsibilities in facilitating the Constituent Assembly elections.[345] Any chance for expanding their socialist coalition beyond the acceptance of the Left SRs was so out of tune with the leadership that an unencumbered Lenin was able to handily steer the CC to eliminate the Bolshevik bureau of the Constituent Assembly altogether in a CC meeting 11 December because it held a 'bourgeois-democratic point of view'. When the Constituent Assembly was closed on 21 January, Ryazanov and A. Lozovsky were the only Bolsheviks who voted in the TsIK against its dispersal.[346] Kamenev could have capitulated to Lenin as Zinoviev had done to retain his party standing, but Kamenev refused to be swept up in the euphoria of revolution and against the wishes of the party leadership pressed to broaden socialist cooperation.

The leadership was not indicative of the party at large outside Petrograd, and with Bolshevik representatives from the provinces inside the TsIK there remained one place Kamenev had some small amount of authority. One example of his ability to influence decision making came when Lenin and Trotsky blundered by having Sovnarkom direct soldiers themselves to conduct armistice negotiations. Nothing but chaos followed on the front line as war-weary soldiers independently clamoured to broker an agreement.[347] Both Lenin and Trotsky had foolhardily thought that publishing the Tsarist government's secret treaties alone was enough to foment revolution abroad.[348] Occupying a far more realistic position than the Bolshevik leadership, Kamenev was able to cash in his political capital with the Left SRs to challenge Lenin's Sovnarkom from within the TsIK. On 10 November in the Congress of Soviets Kamenev

[345] Swain, *The Origins of the Russian Civil War*, p. 76.
[346] Schapiro, p. 86.
[347] This was in response to General N.N. Dukhonin refusing to open armistice negotiations.
[348] Leon Trotsky, *My Life: An Attempt at an Autobiography*, New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1960, p. 341.

sided with G.I. Chudnovsky and the Left SR M.I. Levin to convince Lenin that a five-man committee of three Bolsheviks and two Left SRs should conduct peace negotiations through proper diplomatic channels to keep the frontlines from disintegrating.[349] The TsIK resolved two days later to send a delegation to Brest-Litovsk led by Adolf Joffe to negotiate an armistice with Germany and Austria.[350] His Left SR partnership proved his value to the to the party, and together with Sokol'nikov and Joffe, he set off with two Left SRs, S.D. Mstislavskii and Anastasia Bitsenko to Brest-Litovsk.[351]

Kamenev was chosen because it was his strategy the CC was trying to implement. Whereas Lenin was pressing for genuine peace, Kamenev and the party majority believed that through the armistice talks they could talk over the heads of Germany and Austria's diplomats to the proletariat to incite revolution.[352] Kamenev had made this exact proposal to the Provisional Government in March 1917.[353]

The Bolshevik plan was terribly idealistic. They believed that disseminating propaganda was enough to spark revolution. At the armistice talks in Brest-Litovsk on 27 November the delegation negotiated an agreement with Major-General Max Hoffman[354] to allow Soviet propaganda to pass through Germany to England and France. The talks themselves were to be

[349] Keep, p. 119-121. Also, see *Pravda*, November 13, 1917, p. 2.
[350] He had joined the party at the VI Party Congress.
[351] Symbolically, a sailor, soldier, peasant, and worker were also among the dignitaries to show the world the revolutionary transformation of leadership. For a complete list of dignitaries, see D.G. Fokke, 'Na stsene i za kulisami brestkoi tragikomedii' in *Arkhiv Russkoi Revolyutsii*, 20.4, Berlin: Gessenom, 1930.
[352] Lev Kamenev, *Bor'ba za mir: otchet o mirnykh peregovorakh v Breste,* Petrograd: Knigoizdatel'stvo, zhizn' i znanie, 1918, p. 5-6.
[353] See chapter 2.
[354] Hoffman was chief of staff for the German Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Front Prince Leopold of Bavaria, and had been one of the chief officers responsible for the victory at the Battle of Tannenburg early in the war. He had risen in command and directed the armies of Germany in the East and spoke on behalf of General E.F.W. Ludendorff and the Central Powers. All other delegates allied with Germany were subordinate to him.

propaganda as well. He, L.M. Karakhan,[355] and Mstislavskii painstakingly fought with Wilhelm von Mirbach[356] and a captain Shmidt over each transcribed word of the soon to be published protocols of the meeting. To the overly optimistic delegation a subtle difference in meaning meant the fate of world revolution.[357] However, not all in the TsIK were satisfied. There on 25 November Stanislaw Lapinski declared that simply 'making speeches and taking minutes' was not a viable strategy.[358] Lapinski was right. The Bolsheviks were ill-equipped to try to lead a revolution from afar. They needed agitators, organisers, propagandists, and much needed allies abroad to facilitate revolution abroad.

The Bolsheviks ignored Lapinski's sage criticism and chose to double down on their position. That was why Trotsky came to Brest-Litovsk as the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs 20 December (January 4) shortly after the signing of the 28 day armistice on the Eastern Front.[359] The leadership felt that to stir revolution they simply had to sharpen their message. Trotsky did exactly that when he outraged Germany by demanding they pull back their forces, and under his bold direction on 12 January Kamenev brazenly insisted that all nations currently occupied should hold free and fair elections.[360] The difference was stark, but revolution was not forthcoming.

The Bolshevik leadership finally snapped out of their revolutionary stupor and showed a great sense of practicality. Although Kamenev's Social-Democratic left-centrist position was

[355] He was the secretary to the Russian delegation.
[356] Germany appointed him ambassador to Russia later in April, only for him to be assassinated in Moscow by the Left SR Yakov Blumkin on July 6, 1918, in an attempt to reignite hostilities between the two nations.
[357] To make certain the records were correct the Brest military advisor Colonel D.G. Fokke and Kamenev's wife, Olga Kameneva, then a secretary of the TsIK, scrupulously combed the protocols for accuracy when the delegates returned to Moscow. See Fokke, p. 42 and 63.
[358] Keep, p. 161.
[359] All dates from here forward will be based on the modern Gregorian calendar.
[360] Mainly speaking of Poland, Lithuania, Courland, Riga, and the Moon Sound Islands.

currently unable to garner Bolshevik support in Petrograd, Lenin and the CC understood that they could utilize his conciliatory political line to call socialists and workers to their banner outside Russia where they desperately needed their inter-party politician to raise the flag of revolution. They felt their survival depended on worker uprisings abroad. The TsIK thus charged Kamenev and Kollontai 13 February to take up foreign assignments. Kamenev was to be Russia's plenipotentiary in France,[361] first stopping in England. He was an excellent choice. He was the most talented Bolshevik regarding inter-party relations, and was well connected with French socialists. If his French counterparts could be united and organized under a banner of peace to spark unrest, Kamenev was the most capable individual of making it happen.

The Bolsheviks were looking to expedite revolution utilising left-wing groups abroad, but Kamenev had in mind a coalition on a broader scale. This was clearly visible at the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets when Kamenev rapturously exclaimed that he 'had never felt a feeling of such deep joy' as to read in a 'social-patriotic' newspaper that there could be no successful peace, 'for on one side is located the representatives of the proletariat, and on the other, the representatives of the class interests absolutely opposed to it.'[362] To him it seemed that the 'social-patriots' who Lenin had cast aside were returning to the revolutionary fold. This was everything he had hoped for, the entire socialist 'revolutionary democracy' against the bourgeoisie, his premise of April 1917. Kamenev's position was justified, but exaggerated. Protests had gathered in Berlin and Budapest, and in Vienna strikes over flour rations troubled

[361] Kollontai was to set up shop in Stockholm. See I.M. Dazhina, 'A.M. Kollontai o pervoi sovetskoi zarubezhnoi delegatsii', *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, no. 3, 2008, p. 154.
[362] *Tretii vserossiiskii s"ezd sovetov rabochikh, soldatskikh i krest'yanskikh deputatov*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1935, p. 57.

the capital,[363] but the 20 January announcement in *Izvestiya* that world revolution had begun was certainly premature.[364] There was no guarantee that protest would culminate in insurrection as it had in February 1917 in Russia. On the 24 January the CC approved Trotsky's proposal to declare 'no peace, no war' at the peace negotiations in a gamble to spark revolution.

Kamenev, however, never had the opportunity to test whether his failed domestic political line could find success outside Russia in unifying the 'revolutionary democracy'. Devastated by a German advance unfazed by Trotsky's bold proclamation for 'no peace, no war', Soviet Russia agreed to a humiliating treaty with Germany. Unfortunately for Kamenev, at the time of the peace agreement he was already en route aboard the *S.S. Louth*, arriving in Aberdeen, Scotland on 23 February, and British authorities had no desire to let a man of such great organisational capability interfere in their domestic affairs.[365]

Supporting the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

Up to this point Kamenev had remained adamant about the necessity for a socialist coalition, but his terrible experience abroad severely tempered his idealistic commitment to democracy. In England, for example, the British port authorities were hostile and seized Kamenev's stowed propaganda,[366] Scotland Yard monitored his every move, and at a Communist

[363] Count Ottokar Czernin, *In the World War*, London: Cassel and Company, LTD, 1919, p. 239-240.
[364] *Izvestiya*, January 20, 1918, p. 1.
[365] En route to Norway on 9 February an intelligence officer reported to the British Foreign Office that the Bolsheviks had told him of their intention to distribute revolutionary propaganda. Coupled with peace declared on the Eastern Front, the Foreign Office issued instructions to detain him at Belgun, but he had already set sail to Aberdeen. See PRO F.O. 371/3315/363.
[366] PRO F.O. 371/3315/383, and *The Parliamentary Debates: Official Report*, volume 103, London: Published by His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1918, p. 1605.

Club meeting in Soho where either he or Ivan Zalkind[367] was present, police raided the establishment and arrested thirty-seven 'revolutionaries'.[368] Most labour rumblings were rather mild, but the British government's persistent reactionary use of police to monitor Kamenev exaggerated his belief that labour relations in Britain were volatile. The atmosphere was certainly hostile, but had what was enumerated above been all that occurred on his diplomatic mission in 1918 when he departed 3 March, he would likely have returned to Russia unaffected.[369]

The decisive change in Kamenev's outlook came in mid-March. When he was sailing from Stockholm to Finland a German navy vessel seized his ship[370] and eventually transferred him to a White Finn fortress in Oulu far to the north and deep in White territory.[371] Finland's civil government interned the diplomat in hopes of thwarting Soviet intervention.[372] Prisoners there, which included soviet deputies, were often summarily shot or fed rotten fish to ration much needed food.[373] Kamenev later accurately described the camp as a 'political torture chamber'. After months of Stalin negotiating for a prisoner exchange,[374] on 3 August Kamenev was finally freed.[375] When he returned to Moscow 13 August Kamenev's political line had dramatically changed. Uncharacteristically, Kamenev declared that 'we and socialists do not have allies,

[367] Ivan Zalklind was a Bolshevik plenipotentiary en route to Switzerland.
[368] Public Record Office (PRO) War Cabinet Papers (CAB) 23/5.
[369] Technically, Kamenev had the possibility to stay since he possessed a short-term visa, but with his mission impossible to complete, he left with Zalkind anyway.
[370] See *Izvestiya*, March 15, 1918, p. 3.
[371] His traveling partner Zalkind had parted with Kamenev prior to this encounter, continuing to Switzerland safely through Germany. For his transfer, see Muzika, p. 167.
[372] Kamenev appealed to the British for help, but having worked diligently to expel him and at odds with Finland for their German ally, Britain refused and washed their hands of him. See PRO F.O. 371/3315/55842.
[373] *Izvestiya*, August 13, 1918, p. 6.
[374] V.Yu. Chernyaev, 'Lev Kamenev' in *Biblioteka Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk, raboty L.B. Kameneva v fondakh Biblioteki Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk*, Saint Petersburg, 1992, p. 9.
[375] *Izvestiya*, August 4, 1918, p. 3.

friends, or even neutrality.'[376] Having witnessed the violent force of counter-revolution, he now accepted the rigid Leninist world view that one was either for or against Soviet power.

Kamenev now condoned practices he had previously shunned. He accepted the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution, Profiteering and Corruption's (the Cheka) expansion to Moscow and the expulsion of the rebellious SRs[377] and the Mensheviks from the soviets. In a rare moment breaking his usual moderate tone after the assassination attempt on Lenin on 6 September, he declared that against the bourgeoisie they would conduct a 'red, ruthless, and organized terror'.[378] In 1917 Lenin's insistence on abandoning socialist cooperation in favour of securing power against the bourgeoisie had seemed drastic to him, but now in 1918 Kamenev hesitatingly admitted to his friend Sukhanov that he was prepared for the Bolsheviks to lead alone, saying:

> 'As for myself, I am more and more convinced that Lenin never makes a mistake. In the last analysis he is always right. How often has it seemed that he was slipping up – either in his prognosis or in his political line! But in the last analysis his prognosis and his line were always justified.'[379]

The political repression he had endured at the hands of the British police and his witnessing the cold-blooded execution of fellow socialists in Finland showed Kamenev the full strength and seriousness of the bourgeoisie's desire to eradicate Bolshevism. He now considered that any renunciation of the Communist Party[380] a betrayal of the working class.[381]

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[376] RGASPI 323/2/123, Moscow Soviet Plenum, 13.08.1918.
[377] The coalition with the Left SRs had almost completely come to an end when after resigning from the government in protest of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty Left SR members assassinated the German ambassador on 6 July in hopes of sparking a renewed war.
[378] RGASPI 323/2/130/7.
[379] Sukhanov, p. 226.
[380] The Bolsheviks had changed their name to the Communist Party in his absence in March 1918.

Admitting he was wrong was all it took for Lenin to embrace Kamenev and rekindle their pre-revolutionary friendship. To safeguard the revolution Lenin had broken with the Left Communists to enact policies that went against worker control and a possible commune state by supporting the nationalization of industry to prevent German indemnity payments and to support workers deposing their bourgeois owners. Now in power, the Lenin of August 1918 threw off his April 1917 belief in a decentralising, ever-withering state and yielded to necessity and centralisation at the expense of high flung left-wing idealism. Following Lassalle, Kamenev was certainly in agreement as he had always believed trade unionism, worker control, and syndicalism a hindrance to the labour movement.[382] Considering the poor state of the economy and the Soviet government's need to wage war, even the far left Shlyapnikov[383] and Bukharin[384] were in favour of some form of centralization. Thus the winds were blowing in the right direction for Kamenev's return.

There were important differences that separated Kamenev, from Lenin, Trotsky, and Bukharin's views on the use of terror and dictatorship. On terror Lenin had outlined in his 1917 *State and Revolution* that repression was a necessity in socialist development to keep the bourgeoisie at bay.[385] Trotsky later parroted the same argument in his 1920 *Terrorism or Communism*.[386] Neither of them gave any indication that the bourgeoisie could be converted, and

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[381] *Pravda*, November 15, 1918, p. 3.
[382] Although mentioned briefly in Kamenev's article defending dictatorship, it was a key tenant of his view of socialism in general. See Lev Kamenev, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, London: Communist Party of Great Britain, 1920, p. 13. See also chapter 1.
[383] For example, Shlyapnikov clearly saw the strength in a centralized railway system. See Schapiro, p. 139.
[384] Bukharin had begun to change his position during the summer. See Cohen, p. 80-81.
[385] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 33, p.87-88.
[386] Leon Trotsky, *Dictatorship vs. Democracy (Terrorism and Communism): A Reply to Karl Kautsky*, New York City: Workers' Party of America, 1922, p. 54-57.

Trotsky spoke of utilising bourgeois specialists through 'compulsory labour'.[387] Even Bukharin came round to Lenin and Trotsky when it came to ideologically justifying terror and execution as intrinsic to building socialism. In his 1920 *The Economics of the Transition Period*, Bukharin wrote that '...state coercion under the dictatorship of the proletariat is a method of building communist society'.[388] Trotsky argued the same.[389] Bukharin was convinced that coercion would decrease only when the proletariat's enemies underwent a 're-education' which changed their psychology by forcing them into 'socially useful work'.[390] Stephen Cohen has tried to downplay Bukharin's endorsement of violent repression as Bukharin's optimism run wild and that 'he had little taste for cracking skulls',[391] but the fact remains that Bukharin, Trotsky, and Lenin at the time all advocated violence and terror as institutionally necessary for the development of socialism until communism. Bukharin's 1918 fighting for the legalisation of the Left SRs after their resignation from the government was motivated out of a desire to bolster his own political line with the Left Communists to continue the war. An ingrained socialist principle for democracy was therefore not his guiding light. Bukharin sanctioned coercion and violence for ideological ends and therefore Paul Gregory and E.H. Carr are absolutely wrong to suggest that Bukharin had a 'halo of innocence' in the Civil War.[392]

[387] Ibid., p. 120.
[388] Nikolai Bukharin, *The Politics and Economics of the Transition Period*, trans., Oliver Field, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, p. 135.
[389] Trotsky, *Dictatorship vs. Democracy*, p. 22-23.
[390] Bukharin., p. 161.
[391] Cohen, p. 99-100.
[392] Paul R. Gregory, *Politics, Murder, and Love in Stalin's Kremlin: The Story of Nikolai Bukharin and Anna Larina*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2010, Kindle File, introduction.

In terms of decision making, Trotsky saw no use of the democratically elected soviets other than as economic organs,[393] and Charles Duval and T.H. Rigby have shown that Lenin had never had any intention of them or the TsIK directing policy. Sovnarkom was to be the primary executive body.[394] Carmen Sirianni has likewise illustrated that any promises Lenin made to the party left in 1917 for worker control were quickly abandoned with his 'State Capitalism' policy as it retained capitalist ownership of industry.[395] He had not intended to let workers determine economic policy either. Schapiro was not too far off the mark by defining 1917 Bolshevism and onwards as a 'technique of action' to seize and keep power, but this critique must remain limited to Lenin and Trotsky.[396]

It is evident that what greatly distinguished Kamenev from Lenin, Trotsky, and Bukharin was that he never made a virtue out of necessity by giving War Communism a socialist justification. He specifically wrote that in the civil war he saw the leadership as generals of the proletariat, not as leading the country to socialism.[397] If Kamenev had heard the term 'War Communism' in 1918 he would have related it to the term he understood well, which was 'war socialism', the capitalist co-option of labour to provide the foundation for an economic system where the state directed all aspects of wartime life – the social, political, and economic.[398] He specifically iterated to his peers that they were absolutely not building socialism; the vast majority of their policies were simply to win the war.[399] He opened his 1920 thesis *The*

[393] Trotsky, *Dictatorship vs. Democracy*, p. 47.
[394] See Charles Duval, 'Yakov M. Sverdlov…', and Rigby, *Lenin's Government: Sovnarkom 1917-1922*.
[395] Carmen Sirianni, *Workers' Control and Socialist Democracy: The Soviet Experience,* Thatford: Thatford Press LTD, 1982, p. 58 and 133.
[396] Schapiro, p. 14.
[397] Kamenev, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, p. 13.
[398] See Kamenev, *Krushenie internatsionala*, p. 6.
[399] RGASPI 323/2/124/60.

Dictatorship of the Proletariat with the argument that the bourgeois government had used dictatorship to prosecute the horrific Great War. It was to illustrate how the Soviet government was simply copying that wartime model.[400] Kamenev explicitly outlined that:

> 'The dictatorship of the proletariat is consequently a form of government of the State which is most adapted to the carrying on of a war with the bourgeoisie, and to guarantee most rapidly the victory of the proletariat in such war.'[401]

To him the present dictatorship was necessary to overcome armed bourgeois resistance intent on the destruction of a proletariat government, but he maintained that socialism could only be constructed with the state serving as a positive guiding example to win over opponents through successes, not coercion. At the 1919 VIII Party Congress Kamenev explicitly promised that in peacetime, 'from our society will *disappear all elements of government coercion* and we can pass gradually to a true communist society…'[402] (emphasis added). By not justifying repression he left the door open for socialist cooperation in peacetime.

With the current mode of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' acceptable to the leadership regardless of the nuances separating them, it was no surprise that Lenin brought Kamenev back into the leadership. Instead of the plan to send him to Vienna to assess and assist the workers' movement there, Kamenev was elected into the Moscow Soviet's Executive Committee 21 August, and within a month became its chair. So quickly would he re-ascend the political ladder through Lenin's aid that by the March 1919 VIII Party Congress Kamenev was again elected a

[400] Kamenev, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat,* p. 3-4.
[401] Ibid., p. 12.
[402] *Vos'moi vserossiiskii s"ezd sovetov rabochikh krest'yanskikh i krasnoarmeiskikh deputatov*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1921, p. 261.

member of the CC.[403] When Zinoviev's 22 March proposal to create a Political Bureau (Politburo) became a reality, Kamenev was among its five members charged with resolving all party matters when the CC was not in session. At the 25 March CC meeting Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Kamenev and Krestinskii were elected.[404]

Redefining 'Bolshevik Centrism'

During the civil war Kamenev's actions were in sync with his words on dictatorship. He truly envisioned that after the war there could be a revival and acceptance of democracy. Although Lenin and Trotsky no longer considered that the Mensheviks or the SRs denoted 'shades of opinion' within socialism,[405] Kamenev did, and he struggled to preserve the forces of the 1917 'revolutionary democracy'. After the White Admiral Aleksander Kolchak's betrayal of the SR Directory in Omsk, a Right SR Ufa delegation under the leadership of V.K. Volskii approached the Soviet government in hopes of reconciliation. In need of allies, the Communist CC gave way to its conciliatory members to negotiate.[406] On 10 February 1919 Kamenev led Krestinskii and G.V. Chicherin to broker an agreement. In exchange for a signed declaration from Volskii giving up their demand for reconvening the dispersed Constituent Assembly and stating that only the Soviet government expressed the interests of the whole nation,[407] the SRs were granted the right to their own press. Vladimir Brovkin has argued that the Communists' partial legalisation of the SRs and Mensheviks in early 1919 was due to a ground swell of worker

[403] Kamenev had not been elected into the CC in absentia at the VII Party Congress as he had been at VI Party Congress.
[404] Zinoviev, Bukharin, and Kalinin were elected as well, but they were candidate members, possessing only a consultative vote.
[405] Trotsky, *Dictatorship vs. Democracy*, p. 61-62.
[406] Geoffrey Swain, *Russia's Civil War*, Charleston: Tempus Publishing Inc., 2000, p. 69-70.
[407] *Izvestiya*, February 11, 1919, p. 3.

resistance to the Bolshevik suppression of opposition parties,[408] but this was not the only reason for their acceptance. With CC members like Kamenev in power, workers were pushing on an open door.

What made Kamenev backslide on favouring Menshevik legalisation in the TsIK on 10 February was that the Menshevik *Vsegda Vpered* published the slogan 'Down with Civil War!'. As the war was the central focus of Bolshevik policy, Kamenev warned that *Vsegda Vpered* was weakening the state.[409] When they persisted with their slogan the Cheka seized control of the defiantly critical Menshevik press. Kamenev could have then abandoned them to their fate, but he was so committed to preserving a future socialist democracy that he challenged the right of the Cheka to close down the paper and pushed the party to allow them the possibility to appeal the decision in the TsIK.[410] This showed a determination to preserve legality, about which none of the other leaders were terribly concerned. Kamenev was worried about the terrible impact of the Cheka on the future of the country after the war. He thought the Mensheviks had to be restricted, but not completely removed. At the very least, the Cheka had to be answerable to the elected TsIK. To salvage relations between the two parties Kamenev put himself between the Mensheviks and the CC and won a compromise allowing Mensheviks who supported Soviet power the possibility to occupy non-military posts.[411]

In contrast Lenin regarded any opposition as illegitimate. Even though Communist party membership had reached its lowest point of the civil war by the end of 1919, Lenin was

[408] Vladimir Brovkin, 'Workers' Unrest and the Bolsheviks' Response in 1919', *Slavic Review,* 49.3, 1990, p. 358.
[409] *Pravda,* February 23, 1919, p. 2.
[410] *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, no. 8, 1989, p. 160.
[411] *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, no. 12, 1989, p. 170.

unconcerned with Menshevik influence.[412] From 15-25 February 1920 the Moscow Soviet held elections and the Mensheviks Martov and Dan were re-elected. This news came as shock to Kamenev, but Lenin advised him not to take the matter seriously and joked in a missive, 'I think you should "wear them out" with practical assignments,' and in notation, 'Dan – *sanitary inspection*' and 'Martov – control over the *canteens*'.[413] Rival political parties were no more than a joke to him. Kamenev did not find the opposition a laughing matter and on 6 March he acknowledged the right of Martov to compete for the chair of the Moscow Soviet, but Martov was unsuccessful.[414]

Compromising with political opponents had great limitations under the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' in wartime, but Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' adhered to its principles by trying to restrict what Bolshevik opponents detested most, the Cheka. That was why when he was in the Ukraine in May of 1919 and heard Nester Makhno's heated complaints about wanton Cheka abuses he went straight to the party leader. Lenin stubbornly chose to blame individuals rather than the institution itself and ordered a purge of the Ukrainian Cheka.[415] Herein was the crux of the Kamenev/Gorky and Lenin/Dzerzhinsky disagreement; it was not a matter of personnel. The whole organization was foul and it was destroying every last political connection the Bolsheviks had.

Kamenev's thoughts again returned to curtailing repression when Martov's open criticism of the Moscow Cheka brought the issue to the fore in the Moscow Soviet on 30 December

[412] Richard Sakwa, *Soviet Communists in Power: A study of Moscow during the Civil War, 1918-1921*, London: Macmillion Press LTD, 1988, p. 174.
[413] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 51, p. 150.
[414] *Izvestiya*, March 7, 1920, p. 1.
[415] Farber, p. 134.

1919.[416] Kamenev railed against Martov that 'it is possible that in the activities of the Cheka there were some mistakes, but these mistakes do not give any right to those parties, whose very existence is a continuous mistake, to even look in the direction of the Cheka.'[417] This certainly raises a red flag as to the validity of the argument that Kamenev wanted to aid fellow socialists and curtail repression. The truth is that such harsh words were an exception for Kamenev and highly uncharacteristic. He boldly spoke against his true convictions because he had felt betrayed. When Denikin's forces had approached Moscow in the fall of 1919 he had asked the Mensheviks and the Right SRs under Volskii to openly support Soviet power and they had refused.[418] Kamenev's anger war rather misplaced, as he did not take into account that despite his leniency he was still a leader in the party of oppression.

Disagreement between Kamenev and Dzerzhinsky over speculators highlights Kamenev's idealism about future peacetime socialist construction. In the winter of 1919-20 Moscow was on the verge of economic collapse with an acute scarcity of goods and food.[419] Overwhelmed with speculators, Dzerzhinsky reported to Kamenev that Cheka 'arrests and shootings are leading nowhere. Occurrences are *growing*… the struggle with speculators is like pouring water through a sieve.'[420] Kamenev was right to point out Dzerzhinsky's political and ideological ineptitude in trying to resolve economic difficulties with brutality, complaining that the severe crackdown was only driving speculators underground and undermining efforts to alleviate shortages.[421] Adhering to Lassalle, Kamenev told Dzerzhinsky explicitly that the state should not rely on police

[416] Edward Acton and Tom Stableford, eds., *The Soviet Union: A Documentary History: Volume 1, 1917-1940*, Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007, p. 134.
[417] *Pravda*, December 31, 1919, p. 2.
[418] *Izvestiya TsK*, no. 7, 1919.
[419] *Izvestiya*, January 10, 1920, p. 1.
[420] RGASPI 323/2/159 – In Kamenev's report to Lenin, dated June 29, 1920.
[421] *Pravda*, December 26, 1919, p. 2.

repression, but had to overcome the problem by proving the state a more beneficial distributer than petty-bourgeois speculators.[422] Kamenev showed his commitment to placing winning the war over socialist principle by telling him to overlook speculation. On this occasion Lenin accepted Kamenev's practicality.[423]

During the civil war Kamenev could have washed his hands of his political opponents, but instead they remained in Moscow institutions and Menshevik representatives continued on in the Moscow Soviet. Under Kamenev's direction, the Moscow Soviet abolished the *raion* Cheka altogether on 21 February 1920. As the Cheka was by far their biggest grievance, he advocated institutionalizing the Cheka by use of revolutionary tribunals to make them accountable to state institutions.[424] Realising the general public was similarly dissatisfied; the CC accepted Kamenev's reform along with limiting the Cheka's execution powers exclusively to military zones, and set Kamenev, Stalin, and Dzerzhinsky on a commission to work out the details.[425]

A look at those heading the commissions, notably Stalin, Dzerzhinsky, and Sverdlov, was proof enough that any reform would be limited. Dzerzhinsky certainly was not going to restrict the authority of his own organization, and Stalin and Sverdlov were Lenin's yes men when it came to curtailing political freedom.[426] Kamenev's reforms failed to affect change as Lenin specifically instructed the commissions not to hinder the Cheka's efforts in combating counter-revolutionary forces in any way.[427]

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[422] RGASPI 323/2/131/9.
[423] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 39, p. 125-126
[424] Sakwa, *Soviet Communists in Power,* p. 173.
[425] *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, no. 7, 1989, p. 146.
[426] One needs only look at their actions in the TsIK. See previous chapter.
[427] *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, no. 6, 1989, p. 165.

As the Civil War progressed it became clearer and clearer that the complete legalisation of opposition parties was remote, but at the outset it had not been a foregone conclusion that the Menshevik, Anarchist, or the SR parties were never going to have access to a free press, participate openly in elections, or enjoy legal status. Even with repression there were genuine attempts spearheaded by Kamenev to accept them back into the Soviet fold in some limited form until peacetime. Kamenev occupied the central position between the Bolsheviks and their fellow socialist opponents, but considering the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' was critical to Bolshevik policy, his position afforded Bolshevik opponents very little. When in late 1920 the Civil War was subsiding Kamenev reintroduced the possibility of a multi-party state. In the Moscow Soviet he offered anarchists complete legalisation if they agreed to purge their more radical members,[428] and together with Bukharin he spoke to Lenin about the legalisation of the Mensheviks and SRs.[429] All of this stemmed from Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' and his belief that discourse with opponents was the only way to ensure stability and progress to socialism, but as will be shown, the uprising in Kronstadt silenced Kamenev on Menshevik, Anarchist, and SR legalisation forever.

Kamenev and the British Labour Movement

Kamenev's most successful use of his ability to forge centrist positions did not occur within his own party, but when he returned to England to negotiate a peace settlement between Soviet Russia and Poland in August 1920. The episode is interesting in that it exemplifies how

[428] As a sign of good faith 13 February 1921 Kamenev allowed the release of all anarchists from prison to attend Peter Kropotkin's funeral, but the Cheka soured the overture and a deal was not forthcoming. See Victor Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary, 1901-1941*, trans., Peter Sedgwick, London: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 119 and 123.
[429] Schapiro, p. 208.

effective he could be as a politician if not constantly confronted with immovable and uncompromising men such as Lenin or Trotsky. In a more democratic society where compromise was not always considered a blemish on one's political commitment, Kamenev's ability helped forge the first large-scale labour protest in England in the 20th century.

Nearly all the Bolsheviks, Kamenev included, felt that part of the reason revolution had not spread to Europe was due to a failure of leadership. Twice in 1919 Kamenev had been set to leave abroad to help worker organizations and twice his missions had failed to materialize. Now in 1920 with the Communists nearing complete victory in the Civil War, he again set his eyes to Europe. The opportunity to go abroad arose when England and France pressed Russia to conclude a peace with Poland. On 9 July Kamenev wrote to Lenin urging that the delegation sent to England should agitate workers to oppose England's intervention in Soviet Russia.[430] Lenin did not want to cause trouble because he wished to revitalise trade relations with Great Britain[431] and rejected Kamenev's proposal in favour of sending a true trade delegation, headed by Krasin, writing to Kamenev that 'it is not 1918'. However, not everyone had lulled themselves into a pessimistic outlook and the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Georgii Chicherin backed Kamenev's proposal and convinced Lenin two days later to have Kamenev head the delegation with Krasin and M. Klishko as his deputies, complaining that Krasin was simply a bourgeois 'pet' and would not suffice.[432] N.N. Krestinskii also favoured Kamenev's inclusion because he

[430] RGASPI 323/2/53/4.
[431] Taking such an interest in British trade Lenin often refused to translate trade reports he received from Krasin from English into Russian so that his fellow Politburo members could not debate the offers. See Simon Liberman, *Building Lenin's Russia*, Chicago: Hyperian Press, Inc., 1945, p. 136.
[432] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 51, p. 236. Also see RGASPI 323/2/53/21.

felt the mission was more political than economic, despite looming locomotive purchases.[433] The CC overruled Lenin and accepted the proposal on 16 July. Publically the delegation sought a peace agreement and commercial treaties, but unofficially, Kamenev's delegation desired to divide Britain and France and utilise the growing unrest among Britain's working class to weaken the government's capacity to threaten war.

Kamenev proved himself a talented diplomat in separating Britain and France. At the start Kamenev felt he was going to make little headway because on 3 August the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George immediately threatened Kamenev with a British blockade and an escalation of support for Wrangel if armistice talks with Poland did not commence at once.[434] Lloyd George further rejected Kamenev's proposal for Poland to demobilize and disarm as a precondition for talks.[435] The course of the negotiations changed when Kamenev conceded the precondition in favour of an armistice which would prevent Poland from receiving military aid and provide a ten day cessation of hostilities. This agreement aggravated the French Prime Minister Alexandre Millerand[436] who vehemently criticised Lloyd George in Lympne on 8 August for putting England's trade in leather and locomotives with Russia above their

[433] RGASPI 323/2/53/7. On locomotive purchases and Kamenev's dislike for Krasin see Anthony Heywood, *Modernising Lenin's Russia: Economic Reconstruction, Foreign Trade and the Railways*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 169.

[434] Russian and Polish representatives had met at Baranovitchi on 30 July to discuss armistice terms. However, negotiations quickly ended when Polish representatives told their Russian counterparts that a partial disarmament of their forces signified peace terms, not armistice conditions, and were therefore unable to continue discussions without consulting with their government in Warsaw. When the Polish delegation departed, the Red Army pressed, much to the alarm of Great Britain. The Soviet government then demanded the Poles return to talks in Minsk by 4 August. Polish officials received Chicherin's telegram to resume talks only on 3 August. To move from Warsaw to Minsk was a three day journey, and thus it appeared to Great Britain and her allies that Soviet authorities were deliberately setting impossible time constraints to further their conquest of Poland. See Kamenev's statement to Lloyd George and the Polish government's rebuttal in *The Times*, August 7, 1920, p. 9.

[435] Rohan Butler and J.P.T. Bury, eds. *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, volume VIII, 1920, London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1958, p. 689-690.

[436] Milllerand claimed to have known Kamenev personally in the early 1900s when Jean Jaurés led the French Socialist Party.

commitment to restraining Bolshevism.[437] Even though Lloyd George was a seasoned negotiator, Kamenev came out the victor of the negotiations as Lloyd George was prepared to damage relations with France and accept terms, exactly what the Soviet government wanted.

However, with victory over Poland seemingly at hand, Lenin was seized by a newfound optimism as he envisioned Polish workers rising up to join the advancing Red Army. He therefore wrecked the agreement Kamenev had worked hard to obtain. Kamenev had sent word to Moscow to halt the Red Army's advance, for he had accomplished his objective and 'forced Lloyd George to admit the justice of the terms in opposition to the attitude of France.'[438] While Trotsky also urged peace, Lenin and Stalin[439] steered the CC to reject the agreement on 9 August. They chose to have the CC make a decision based on faith in a Polish working class uprising rather than listen to their level-headed colleague.

Kamenev achieved what British politicians before him had failed to do; he united the labour movement. He followed Lassalle's example and made one central goal their rallying platform, the call for peace with Soviet Russia. Stephen White has contended that unity came together out of sheer opposition to war,[440] but this ignores the timing labour relations reached a fever pitch with their government and how the leadership in England viewed the situation. In July the Trades Union Congress had threatened a general strike to oppose Lloyd George's government sending munitions to Poland, but Kamenev turned the movement to be a proactive political force rather than a reactive one. With great resolve Kamenev met personally with key leaders, wrote

[437] Ibid., p. 715.
[438] Parliamentary Archives Dav/116/003877.
[439] A.V. Kvashonkin, et al., eds., *Bol'shevistskoe rukovodstvo perepiska 1912-1927*, Moscow: Rosspen, 1996, p. 155.
[440] Stephen White, 'Labour's Council of Action', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 9.4, 1974, p. 100.

articles for socialist newspapers, illegally attended rallies,[441] and ghost edited the socialist *Daily Herald* funded by Russian smuggled diamonds.[442] His efforts inspired and galvanized rival parties to look past their differences. On 3 August Kamenev noted to Chicherin that from the Communist A.A. Purcell to Labour's Arthur Henderson, the British labour movement stood united.[443] Kamenev's great achievement came at a conference held in the House of Commons on 9 August where he negotiated an agreement between the Labour Party and the Trades Union Council to form a Council of Action (COA),[444] a body which endeavoured to act beyond parliamentary limitations to halt aid to Poland and ensure peace with Soviet Russia.[445] The COA represented over six million workers and over 1,044 delegates participated at its initial congress.[446] Within weeks local COAs had sprung up across the country, with some taking protest actions.[447] Kamenev happily cabled Chicherin that men of 'all shades of opinion' were meeting with him on behalf of the COA to coordinate.[448] On 12 August Kamenev optimistically cabled home that even the right-wing of the labour movement was 'magnificent' and that he believed a COA strike could strip France of much needed coal and push England to continued peace with Russia.[449]

As the COAs resembled Russia's early soviets and were in essence the embryo of working class self-government, the British government became terribly alarmed. A look at the

[441] His close friend Clare Sheridan wrote of one of his 'chance' illegal meetings. See Clare Sheridan, *Mayfair to Moscow,* New York: Boni & Liveright Inc., 1921, p. 28-29.
[442] Links to the paper had been forged back in February when the paper's editor met Kamenev personally during a plenum of the Moscow Soviet. See *Pravda*, February 15, 1920, p. 2.
[443] See Parliamentary Archives Dav/117 and Dav/116/003705.
[444] Parliamentary Archives Dav/116/War Office letter dated August 24, 1920.
[445] White, p. 99.
[446] RGASPI 323/2/124/53.
[447] One example of COA action was when the Rosyth and Portsmouth dockyard COAs vowed through strike to thwart British Naval Forces from blockading Russia. See Parliamentary Archives Dav/117.
[448] Parliamentary Archives Dav/116/003748.
[449] Parliamentary Archives Dav/116/003793.

British leadership's response proves the significance of Kamenev's influence. The Lord Privy Seal A. Bonar Law placed the blame squarely on Kamenev's shoulders, writing to the Prime Minister that the labour movement's cohesion had everything to do with 'Kamenev's brains which seem to be better than any which the Labour extremists possess…'[450] Sir Basil Thompson was likewise stunned at how quickly a usually 'apathetic' working class had now become a unified labour movement.[451] Lloyd George's Home Secretary Edward Shortt feared the Russian delegation could cause 'serious revolutionary disturbances' in a crisis.[452]

White maintains that the labour movement began to deteriorate when Britain's intervention plans began to wane as Poland turned back the Soviet army,[453] but he is wrong because it was actually before Poland's successful counterattack that support began to subside. The blame for the labour movement's cooling to Soviet efforts squarely rests on Lenin. As Lenin had dismantled the Vikzhel agreements, so too did he wreck Kamenev's cooperative gains in England. Part of the reason Kamenev had been so successful in uniting the British labour movement from right to left was because of the fact Soviet Russia was fighting a defensive war. That all changed when at Minsk the Soviet delegation began insisting that a workers' militia be established in Poland. Kamenev considered it a 'colossal mistake' and warned Chicherin on 9 August that the decision was cooling the British labour movement.[454] The Communists had the opportunity to win over the hearts and minds of their fellow socialists abroad with a just peace, but Lenin was in a revolutionary fever and saw Polish conquest as the avenue for Soviet Russia to link with the German proletariat. Kamenev cabled Chicherin and demanded that the TsIK

[450] Parliamentary Archives BL/101/4/86.
[451] Richard H. Ullman, *The Anglo-Soviet Accord*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973, p. 265.
[452] Parliamentary Archives Dav/117.
[453] White, p. 100.
[454] Parliamentary Archives Dav/117/003720.

should take a stance on the issue in hopes of bypassing Lenin.[455] The CC's directive to foment unrest and secure peace with Britain, then a reality, had changed. Lenin saw little value in Kamenev's organised COA, responding 'the fact that we have shaken up the workmen is in itself no mean gain.'[456] Dumbfounded, Kamenev could not understand how worker strikes for political, not social, ends warranted such small recognition. He had no choice but to watch England's labour movement disintegrate over infighting as to whether they could support the Soviet Union and its expansionist war.

Unwilling to compromise their position even in defeat, days later in a fit of delusion the Politburo instructed Kamenev, 'it would be well if the workers were to demand now no longer peace with Russia, but assistance for Soviet Russia against Poland and Wrangel,' and for British workers to form volunteer detachments.[457] When Kamenev protested, the Politburo reprimanded him.[458] With this decision, on 25 August Kamenev cabled that all hope for united Soviet support was lost.[459]

With Soviet Russia no longer a threat to peace in Europe, the British government, long annoyed with Kamenev's intervention in British internal affairs, announced on 2 September their intention to expel him from the country. A revolutionary sober Lenin was much relieved that Krasin was exempt from the charges and remained to continue trade negotiations.

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[455] Parliamentary Archives Dav/116/003813.
[456] Parliamentary Archives Dav/116/003797. Lenin saw no real prospects for change in Britain without a proletariat willing to violently disarm their bourgeoisie. He had remarked to Bertrand Russell in June that 'those who preach anything else are social traitors or deluded fools.' See Bertrand Russell, *Bolshevism: Practice and Theory,* Arno Press: New York, 1972, p. 31.
[457] Parliamentary Archives Dav/117 – Chicherin cable to Kamenev, dated August 22, 1920.
[458] Parliamentary Archives Dav/117.
[459] Parliamentary Archives Dav/003937.

The Centralisation of Power

Kamenev's tolerance of dissent and promotion of democratic ideas did not make him immune from playing a part in narrowing power to better prosecute the war.[460] Evan Mawdsley has shown that the efforts made by local soviets to implement central directives were essential to the Reds success in the Civil War.[461] To achieve this efficiency meant curtailing local legislative power. For example, on 30 November 1918 Kamenev acknowledged the necessity of relinquishing the Moscow Soviet's authority to the newly founded Soviet of Workers' and Peasants' Defence's to defend the Soviet republic.[462] Later when the war effort was strapped for grain with forced requisitioning greatly diminishing grain production Kamenev turned to more authoritative measures in mid-January 1919.[463] Panic was causing the localities to withhold food provisions, and with cities starving, at a joint meeting of the TsIK of the Moscow Soviet, the All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions, and in agreement with the CC on 17 January Kamenev advanced the idea to decree a government monopoly on grain, sugar, tea, and salt and regulate meat, fish, hemp, animal fat, sunflower and flax oil prices. The decree compelled local food provision organs to procure the commodities enumerated and at the same time denied the localities the right to hinder the transport or the sale of the indicated products in bazaars and markets. To ensure compliance, everything was placed under the scrutiny of worker inspection.[464] When Kamenev personally led a team on the authority of the Council of Workers' and Peasants' Defence on 29 March to the Volga region to sort out grain procurement problems

[460] The TsIK declared Russia to be in state of war on 2 September 1918.
[461] Evan Mawdsley, *The Russian Civil War*, Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2000, Kindle File, chapter six.
[462]Lenin created the organisation to act with near commissariat authority in mobilising the country's defence efforts. Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky, Nevsky, Bryukhanov, and Krassin were its original members. See Rigby, *Lenin's Government: Sovnarkom 1917-1922*, p. 84. See also *Izvestiya*, December 1, 1918, p. 2.
[463] *Izvestiya*, January 18, 1919, p. 3.
[464] Ibid.

to aid Moscow he aped his previous methods and forced through council directives to override local prerogatives to secure 300 three million puds of food provisions for Moscow and Petrograd.[465]

Part of Kamenev's problem was that although he saw himself as a representative of local power, he was not able to successfully divorce his Politburo membership from his post as head of the Moscow Soviet. When the Supreme Economic Council (VSNKh) and the Moscow Oblast Council of the Economy (MOSNKh) were at loggerheads over which organ economically directed the capital, Kamenev backed VSNKh. This posed a problem when the Moscow Soviet countermanded one of VSNKh's decrees. In the Moscow Soviet, E.N. Ignatov argued that to deprive the Moscow Soviet of its authority would go against the 'All Power to the Soviets' revolutionary slogan.[466] Describing it as 'more practical' for the war effort, Kamenev proposed 3 January to turn local city departments into sections of central governing bodies so that issued decrees could be implemented without two organization competing against one another. The Moscow Soviet rejected his proposal. Like Lenin, he saw the constitution as outdated, formed at a time void of war.[467] Thus he complained to Lenin:

> 'I scold my colleagues every day for their 'wild Moscow chauvinism' (*dikoe Moskovarstvo*), and not because they violate the constitution, but because they do not want to go beyond its limits for the sake of a greater unity of the centre and localities than it is dictated by the directives.'[468]

The passage reveals the frustration Kamenev faced in driving through policy. He understood many party members' commitment to preserving local power structures, but as a member of the

[465] RGASPI 323/2/159. Telegram from Kamenev to Lenin, dated April 5, 1919. See also 'Ekspeditsiya L. B. Kameneva dlya prodvizheniya prodgruzov k Moskve v 1919 godu', *Proletarskaya Revolutsiya*, no. 6, 1925, p. 122.
[466] Sakwa, *Soviet Communists in Power,* p. 50.
[467] RGASPI 323/2/129/38.
[468] RGASPI, 323/2/159. Letter from Kamenev to Lenin, dated January 27, 1919.

Politburo he had a greater sense of the wartime needs of the Soviet state. This proved a disadvantage to local power as Kamenev continually steamrolled central directives through the Moscow Soviet out of necessity for the greater whole. However, without soviet leaders enforcing top-down directives the situation for the Bolsheviks would have been far more perilous than it was already, but Kamenev's leading the Moscow Soviet to be under the thumb of Sovnarkom significantly eroded democracy in the soviets as it set the example for the entire country.

Compromise

There is no greater proof as to Kamenev's intentions to decentralise decision making in peacetime than how he lent a sympathetic ear to the Democratic Centralists (the *decists*). In the party emerged a group headed by N. Osinkskii, T.V. Sapronov, and Yu. Maksimovskii, who were critical of the party's ever growing bureaucracy and the ever diminishing role of rank-and-file party members having a say in determining party directives. They felt inner-party debate essential, despised 'one-man' leadership, and desired the soviets play a role in determining the country's future. At the 29 March to 5 April 1920 IX Party Congress Osinskii put forth their group's grievances and further proposed that the authority of Sovnarkom be reduced in favour of the TsIK. Clearly he had in mind to undo Sverdlov and Lenin's subversion of the TsIK to Sovnarkom. In many ways for Kamenev the *decists* were pushing on an open door. Kamenev agreed that the commissariats often overtasked the localities unaware of their difficulties.[469] He promised that with the end of the civil war commissariat departments operating outside soviet control would have to be brought in line with soviets directly managing local enterprises.[470] He

[469] *Devyatyi s"ezd RKP(b),* Moscow: Partiinoe izdatel'stvo, 1934, p. 76 and 176.
[470] RGASPI 323/2/124/67.

proposed that soviets would soon be divided into sections according to commissariat, incorporating local trade unions and factory committees with consulting votes to strengthen local representation.[471] These were meagre compromises as the soviets would still primarily function as administrative organs.

His biggest concession to the *decists* was when at a joint meeting of the Executive Committee of the Moscow Soviet and the Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party on 11 December he expounded that the state should expand TsIK's authority by requiring that commissariat decisions be discussed and approved by the TsIK before publication.[472] Furthermore, the TsIK was to act as an arbitrator to settle commissariat and soviet disputes.[473] Albeit it gave the TsIK a more judicial role than legislative, this was a radical turn towards granting the democratically elected soviets a way to hold commissariats responsible to the localities. Finally, in the party's Moscow Committee Kamenev outright accepted and put in full effect the *decist's* desire that opposition figures have a voice in party discussion by allotting them time to speak in party cells.[474] Kamenev had always been lenient with opposition groups, but now they could speak much more frequent and candidly. As Jonathan Ares has shown, one of the main reasons debates became so open and intense in Moscow was due to Kamenev's relaxed rule. The same could not be said of Zinoviev, whose authoritarian restrictions in Petrograd had created heated unrest throughout the civil war.[475]

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[471] RGASPI 323/2/129/20-23.
[472] In the TsIK's first year Sovnarkom had presented only 48 of 480 decrees for ratification. See Sirianni, p. 204. For Kamenev's declaration, see *Izvestiya*, December 12, 1920, p. 2.
[473] RGASPI 323/2/129/24.
[474] RGASPI 323/2/20/4.
[475] Jonathan Ares, *Workers against Lenin: Labour protest and the Bolshevik dictatorship*, London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1996, p. 78, 109, and 131.

Kamenev sought compromise with the *decists* due to his 'Bolshevik Centrism'. There were aspects of the *decists* Kamenev refused to accept, mainly their call for factory committee decisions to be binding on soviet or party organs.[476] To allow factory committees the ability to debate or plan policy smacked of syndicalism. Here the influence of Lassalle is clearly seen as Kamenev believed the state's mission was to unite workers collectively. Endorsing anything that would render factories or local committees autonomous went against Lassalle's unifying goal. Out of this principle stemmed Kamenev's criticism of the trade unionist Tomskii and his belief in collegiate management, something the *decists* also supported. To Kamenev it was not a matter of favouring dictatorship, but of ensuring localities never had the opportunity to work against the common good. A single director was much more manageable to ensure cooperation between localities and in promoting the policies emanating from the country's central organs. Kamenev's backing of Trotsky's proposed one-man management rule of factories is therefore understandable.[477]

The legislative reforms Kamenev endorsed surrounding the TsIK would have changed the working dynamic of soviet administration. Having Sovnarkom decisions debated and approved in the TsIK would have in theory put a check on the power of the country's leading state organ, Sovnarkom. Considering the party's continued domination of the soviets it would likely have been no more than a rubber stamp, but in principle it meant that the TsIK could have rejected policies it deemed violated the independent operations of the soviets. Kamenev had already attempted to exercise the TsIK for this purpose. In the TsIK in January 1918 he influenced Sovnarkom to change its direction on how to obtain peace with Germany. Later in 1919 he had

[476] *Devyatyi s"ezd RKP(b),* p. 178.
[477] Ibid., p. 179.

tried to oppose the Cheka suppression of the Mensheviks by forcing debate in the TsIK. Although his efforts failed, he was not discouraged to attempt to bypass Lenin in 1920 when dealing with the labour movement in Great Britain when he thought Lenin's change of position violated their mission objectives. However, that too had come to naught. Considering that at this point in 1920 Kamenev was pushing to return the country to a multi-party state, his support of the *decists* in regard to the soviets may have led to a drastic change had opposition parties again been fully legalised. Given his past history, there is no reason to think that Kamenev's desire to compromise with the *decists* was anything but sincere.

Trade Unions, Crisis, and Kronstadt

In 1917 Kamenev had maintained a centre-left position between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, but his horrific experience in Finland had moved him closer to Lenin's views in 1918 because he felt the civil war demanded dictatorship to survive. By late 1920, the ebbing of civil war convinced him that a multi-party state was possible and that open party discussion was now viable. This openness in the Moscow Party led to the lively debate over the future of trade unions in Soviet development.

After Trotsky's success in saving Russia's railways from ruin with militarised iron discipline, Trotsky desired to strip all trade unions of autonomy in similar fashion so that they could function as administrative tools of the state. Later known as the 'Platform of the Ten', Lenin and Zinoviev were fundamentally against this approach and argued that instead trade unions had to be under the tutelage of the party but remain autonomous from the state to serve as pressure groups in decision making and inculcate non-party workers with Communist doctrine.

The third contending group jockeying to gain the party majority was the so-called 'Workers' Opposition', led by Shlyapnikov and Kollontai. They sought to wrestle trade unions from state control through independent elections binding on the party to give them control over the economy through a congress of producers. Harkening to the promises of October, workers were to regain factory control.

Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' again emerged by his welcoming open discussion between platforms in Moscow, and when the CC ordered Trotsky to desist from voicing his ideas because they were stirring worker protest, Kamenev defended his right to speak and opposed the CC decision.[478] He even went so far as to arrange a meeting between Trotsky and Lenin to resolve their differences. However, Trotsky was not willing to listen to either Kamenev or Lenin and broke ranks, taking the matter to the party at large. Kamenev had tried to remain neutral in hopes of facilitating a compromise agreement, but Trotsky forced him to take a stand.

At first it appeared that Kamenev was going to support Trotsky.[479] He was very much in favour of having workers wield influence directly through state institutions, and Trotsky's bold proposal was in effect breaking down barriers between the state and trade unions. The reason he could not commit to Trotsky's proposal was because only seven percent of trade unionists were Communists.[480] Kamenev rightly felt that by forcing non-party workers to do the bidding of a minority it would push workers away from the party when their goal was to do quite the opposite.[481] His key objection was what permeated throughout all his ideas from past to present - coercion was not conducive to socialism. Workers had to be wilfully drawn in to state institutions

[478] Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed*, p. 502.
[479] *Protokoly X s"ezda RKP (b)*, Moscow: Partiinoe izdatel'stvo, 1933, p. 354.
[480] Kamenev believed there were only 500,000 trade union communists to 7 million total. See RGASPI 323/2/60/67.
[481] RGASPI 323/2/60/69 and 323/2/60/81.

to ensure a true working class government. Similar to Zinoviev and Lenin, Kamenev was also correctly concerned that Trotsky paid too little attention to the peasantry. Put more poignantly, Kamenev asserted that Trotsky's adherents were behaving as though Soviet Russia was already a 'Soviet oasis'.[482] Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' and Kamenev's search for compromise thus gave ideological ground to Trotsky, but refuted his plan's implementation as practically unfeasible for the time being.

The Workers' Opposition protest for greater worker involvement in the state and a move away from top-down party appointment definitely meant that Kamenev supported them in spirit, but he could never swallow their syndicalism.[483] As he could not support forcing workers to the Communist cause, he likewise could not accept the inverse, forcing the party to adhere to the trade unions.[484] Envisioning the return of the Menshevik party, Kamenev feared trade union workers would join their ranks rather than join the Communists and through the backdoor change the direction of state policy. Thus, Kamenev's biggest apprehension over both Trotsky and the Workers' Opposition was that workers had not yet been won over to the party and state, and that was why he joined Lenin and Zinoviev's 'Platform of the Ten'. Making the trade unions non-state organs with the expressed intent to win over the masses was the policy he felt best suited their present conditions. Most Moscow Communists backed the 'platform of the ten', which became the clear majority position by 18 January.[485]

Kamenev's concern for the peasant masses casts significant doubt on Silvana Malle's contention that the Communists treated the peasantry harshly because in Marxist ideology their

[482] RGAPSI 323/2/60/66.
[483] *Protokoly X s"ezda RKP (b)*, p. 854.
[484] RGASPI 323/2/60/74.
[485] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 42, p. 242.

needs were subservient to workers.[486] As seen through Kamenev, part of the Social-Democratic roots of Bolshevism came from Lassalle, not Marx, and although Lassalle had felt the peasantry too reactionary to play a role in revolution, his vision for the working class as a positive influence negated the use of coercion. Kamenev had recognized many times throughout the civil war that brute force was not conducive to providing the state with adequate grain supplies. On three separate occasions in 1919 he proposed ending forced grain procurement in exchange for limited free trade. He proposed it to the TsIK in January in an effort to stave off starvation,[487] in May to increase production in Melitopol'sk, Ukraine,[488] and in July in the Moscow Soviet to alleviate grain shortages.[489] Although he had limited success with the latter two attempts, they never became national policy. According to Isaac Deutscher, Trotsky too had alighted upon free trade among the peasantry before turning his mind to forced labour armies,[490] but unlike with Trotsky, with Kamenev there was consistency in his approach to avoid compulsion. Kamenev had rejected the Workers' Opposition partly out of concern for the peasantry. The party could not disregard peasant interests.

However, Kamenev's pushing for legislative reform, a multi-party state, and endorsing the *decists* call for open debate came to a grinding halt with the 1921 Kronstadt uprising. The trade union debate brought disagreements into public view and emboldened protest with the Communist government. Workers in Petrograd went on strike, with anarchists and Mensheviks gaining popularity from a population disillusioned with unfulfilled Communist promises.

[486] Silvana Malle, *The Economic Organization of War Communism: 1918-1921,* London: Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 495-497.
[487] RGASPI 323/2/120/14
[488] 'Ekspeditsiya L. B. Kameneva…', p. 129.
[489] RGASPI 323/2/123, Moscow Soviet Plenum 15.07.1919.
[490] Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed, Trostky: 1879-1921,* p. 516.

Kronstadt sailors desired new and free elections, the legalisation of political parties, the right of assembly, and various other civil liberties. So utterly discontented, they rebelled during the 8 March X Party Congress. In the villages too victimised peasants rebelled against the continuation of the brutal grain procurement policy of War Communism.

An oppressive wind suddenly blew through the party and all tolerance for public dissent disappeared, and Kamenev's total silence on the Kronstadt rebellion is rather telling. Never again did he argue for a multi-party state. The event served as the critical event which divorced Kamenev from his Social-Democratic leanings, realigning his 'Bolshevik Centrism' to exclude the possibility of compromise with other socialists. Kamenev was more idealistic concerning democracy, but he saw in Kronstadt the potential for the triumph of counterrevolution. At the VIII Party Conference in December 1919, Kamenev had praised lively debate and disagreements,[491] and although he would continually tolerate dissent in Moscow to a degree not shared by any other leading Communist, he was silent when Lenin capitalised on the mood at the X Congress to bolster the party to accept a ban on all factional activity. To quiet worker and peasant unrest, Lenin proposed the New Economic Policy (NEP), which allowed peasants the possibility to sell grain on a limited free market, and Kamenev came forward as its biggest supporter.

The Demise of Political Dialogue

When assessing Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' and his search for compromise solutions, the civil war broke his final ties to Social-Democracy. Before 1914 Kamenev had sought compromise between Bogdanov and Lenin at a time socialist cooperation was a given

[491] *Vos'maya konferentsiya RKP (b) dekabr' 1919 goda*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1961, p. 184.

under the umbrella of Social-Democracy. After 1914 Lenin began to diverge from Social-Democracy until the point where his monologism rejected any and all compromise with any non-Bolshevik not accepting his worldview. In contrast Kamenev continued to espouse a centrist position between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks throughout 1917, a position which began with a party majority supporting him. Lenin's line that contended only the Bolsheviks knew the true Marxist path eclipsed Kamenev's with the success of the October Revolution, and at the outset of 1918 Kamenev's support dwindled to the point where his 'Bolshevik Centrism' held little influence domestically. The practicality of Kamenev's political line, however, remained useful to the leadership desperate to unify socialist forces abroad to protest for peace and revolution to aid Russia. However, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk brought his mission to France to an abrupt end.

It was at this point that the civil war and allied intervention forced Kamenev to re-centre his political line. His terrible experiences in England and his brutal Finnish internment played a decisively critical role in leading the most ardent defender of a socialist coalition government to publically endorse dictatorship. However, Kamenev's vision of dictatorship was temporary. Unlike Lenin, Trotsky, or Bukharin, he never justified coercion on socialist principle. The 'dictatorship of the proletariat' was a system he felt necessary to conduct war, but not to build socialism. In contrast to Lenin or Trotsky, he envisioned that fellow socialists would again return to politics in peacetime. Nevertheless, his acceptance of dictatorship brought him back into Lenin and the party's good graces and his 'Bolshevik Centrism' therefore adapted, but he strained to stay connected to Social-Democracy by continually fighting to preserve socialist democracy for the future. This is evident by his negotiating an agreement between his party and the Right SRs,

his desire to legalise the Menshevik party in 1919 and in 1920, his toleration of Mensheviks in the Moscow Soviet throughout the civil war, his talks with Makhno, his attempt to legalise the Anarchists, and finally his persistent and sincere attempts to curb the excesses of the Cheka against Communist opponents. Kamenev truly believed that 'shades of socialism' existed and should not be stamped out with force.

Inside the party Kamenev tried his best to find compromise as well. When the Democratic Centralists challenged Kamenev on party dissent and the role of the soviets, he fully yielded on granting dissenting Bolsheviks more time to speak at party meetings in Moscow. As for the soviets, Kamenev had subverted Moscow's local authority to Sovnarkom directives to wage war and acknowledged that the Democratic Centrists had legitimate complaints about the demise of soviet institutions in decision making. His greatest concession to them was his vow to revitalise them by granting the TsIK legislative approval over Sovnarkom decrees. With Trotsky he too tried to broker compromise. During the trade union debates Kamenev conceded the ideological merit of Trotsky's position and tried to bring Lenin and Trotsky to some form of settlement, but Trotsky stubbornly refused to negotiate and Kamenev therefore joined Lenin for the practicality of his position.

What is clear is that during the civil war Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' operated within the bounds of the Bolshevik's prime directive, to ensure military victory. Kamenev's efforts to rein in Cheka abuse and his ability to help unite the entire British labour movement are testament to his commitment to find common ground. Yet Kamenev's inability to effectively combat his leading peers' desire to make a socialist virtue of terror meant that what he did contribute to repression had lasting repercussions. When the Kronstadt sailors revolted, the fear

of counterrevolution solidified Lenin's 1917 political line that the Bolsheviks should rule unmolested by compromise or conciliation. Even Kamenev, the party's leading advocate for a socialist coalition government surrendered to the idea of a one-party dictatorship.

CHAPTER 5

War Communism was abandoned in 1921 in the face of widespread unrest – the Kronstadt revolt, the peasant uprising in Tambov province, and the wave of industrial disturbances worried the Communist leadership. The New Economic Policy ended the policy of forced grain requisitioning, replacing it with a tax in kind, which in time became a monetary tax. Lenin promoted the need for a *smychka* (alliance) between the proletariat and the peasantry. The State monopoly of industry was eased and private shops, cafes, bars and night clubs re-opened. NEP was seen as a retreat into capitalism and was widely resented by party activists, whilst the adjustment to the new reality caused great strains especially amongst the industrial working class. The period of 1921 to 1924 saw efforts to consolidate the NEP economy. But this was associated with a tightening of the party dictatorship, and the strengthening of discipline within the party. As Kamenev was the leader of the Moscow Party Organisation (MPO) and the Moscow Soviet he was caught up in the detailed management of the capital and its economy. His work in this period sheds light on how far he espoused a centrist Bolshevik position, how he viewed the NEP, how he saw the party-state and its relations with the different classes in society, and how he sought to reconcile conflicts of interests. It also shows how he positioned himself within the party in the struggle regarding the operation of NEP both in terms of its practicalities and in terms of its general principles.

NEP and the 'Dictatorship of the Party'

With Kronstadt ensuring that Soviet Russia would remain a one-party state with the SRs and the Mensheviks outlawed, their publications closed and their leaders driven into exile, or in

the case of the SRs put on trial, Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' essentially narrowed, as Kamenev now only aspired to maintain cohesion within his own party. With the Communists ruling alone, 'the shades of socialism' Kamenev had hitherto believed necessary to be heard no longer had a voice, and for the rest of his life he would try to square the circle of what he knew was a mistake – the dictatorship of a single party.[492] To overcome it he attempted to follow Lassalle's views on merging the state with society, and given the nature of the party dictatorship this had drastic consequences which shall be subsequently explored.

Kamenev unreservedly backed Lenin at the March X Party Congress to support NEP for its concession to the peasantry. Not only did it become the party's core programme and thus a key feature of his 'Bolshevik Centrism', but Kamenev felt that NEP had within its framework the possibility to rectify the loss of political agency to the different strata of society under Soviet rule. He did not say it explicitly until the beginning of 1923, but Kamenev saw the regime as the 'dictatorship of the party' and not the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. As he defined the terms in early 1923, the 'dictatorship of the party' sought to form better relations between the peasantry and the working class in their relation to the party-state as he contended the party, not the proletariat, ruled Soviet Russia. He had twice warned the party before the revolution that without popular support the Bolsheviks were acting as Jacobins, and his vision of the state as a 'dictatorship of the party' was a natural extension of that idea. As for the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', he vaguely redefined the term from his civil war definition from a system of

[492] Sukhanov had sensed his great hesitation over accepting a one-party state. See Sukhanov, p. 226.

government by which the proletariat waged war, to now being a term describing genuine proletarian rule, only achievable if world revolution succeeded.[493]

His view of the Soviet state as a 'dictatorship of the party' was dramatically different than that of Trotsky, Lenin, and Bukharin. Paresh Chattopadnyay convincingly argues that these three men all shared the same ingrained idea that by simply controlling the state apparatus they had in effect established a proletarian state, but Marx never suggested that the state ownership of production equated to socialist development. Chattopadnyay accurately accords Marx's state as one by which workers operated in a 'union of free individuals' in a system void of commodity production and wage relations in a type of individual labour exchange, nothing similar to what Trotsky, Bukharin, or Lenin adhered.[494] The commonality that Chattopadnyay has described between them is vastly important when evaluating Kamenev's post-civil war policies. Kamenev was the only leading figure who rightly understood that the Soviet Union under the dictatorship of the Communist party was by definition not a working class state in Marxist terms.

From Lenin's perspective the NEP was akin to his early 1918 'state capitalism' policies, believing it a stage of socialist development directed under proletarian dictatorship. From Taylorism to Fordism, accepting this concept of the state gave him great latitude in pursuing all kinds of capitalist measures to increase worker productivity, agriculture, the economy, and to bolster Soviet power. Combined with his call for concessions to the peasantry, his policies jarred the party left. Bukharin shall be discussed next chapter, but as for Trotsky, he endorsed NEP as a tactical retreat. In this sense the peasantry was viewed as alien to the state.

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[493] RGASPI 323/2/20/100.
[494] Paresh Chattopadhyay, 'Worlds Apart: Socialism in Marx and in Early Bolshevism: A Provisional Overview', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40.53, 2005-2006, p. 5630-5634.

Kamenev's 'dictatorship of the party' approach to NEP was holistic, as it understood the realities of Soviet Russia and took a balanced approach to both the peasantry and the proletariat. Unlike Lenin who felt the state already acted in the interests of the proletariat, Kamenev felt they needed to gain the 'trust' of workers as well as the peasantry. In the framework of the NEP Kamenev devised programs to bridge the divide between the working class and the state. For example, to address a petition from the Mensheviks Kamenev spearheaded a campaign to revitalise the Moscow Soviet by including more non-party members. He even persuaded Lenin to expand the role of soviet non-party representatives by incorporating 18 non-party representatives into the executive committee on 14 May.[495] However, this was largely cosmetic as real state power rested with Sovnarkom and not the soviets.

By understanding Kamenev's position that the state was in fact a 'dictatorship of the party', it is easy to see why he was so adamant about tolerating dissent. Opponents to the party and its NEP had to be won over. Kamenev therefore did not take the X Party Congress ban on factions too seriously. G. Ya. Belen'kii recalled that 'in the Moscow Party Organisation I never saw any repression,'[496] and Ryazanov explained that because the lenient Kamenev maintained an open dialogue with dissenters he had the 'unbounded affection and endless respect from all members of the Moscow Party Organisation'.[497] Wanting to gain peasant trust, it is no wonder that in 1922 Left SRs still remained in the Moscow Soviet![498] Kamenev's leniency displeased his

[495] *Izvestiya,* May 12, 1921, p. 2.
[496] *XII s''ezda RKP(b), 17-25 aprelya 1923 goda,* Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1968, p. 117.
[497] RGASPI 323/2/61/1-8.
[498] Schapiro, p. 126.

colleagues. Zinoviev, who ran Petrograd as his fief, complained that Kamenev allowed too many opposition groups the possibility to speak their views.[499]

The difference in stance taken by Lenin and Kamenev regarding the state and the proletariat was reflected in one of Kamenev's biggest policies which bore a striking similarity to the 'collectivism' which Bogdanov espoused as the leader of *Proletkult*. Unlike Lenin who was committed to capitalist wage relations, Kamenev and Bogdanov believed that rooting out individualism among workers was essential to building a proletarian collective identity.[500] Kamenev devised such a plan when the drought-ridden Volga region in August left Moscow's grain supply short 50 percent the previous months volume,[501] a sum only able to provide for half its state-employed workers.[502] To solve the problem Kamenev proposed that Moscow's largest plants and factories should move from individual ration payments to collective ones. If plants or factories could reach production goals with fewer workers, then each worker would receive a larger percentage of the plant's share and increase productivity. He hoped these favourable salary conditions would raise worker loyalty to the state as both worker and state industry improved simultaneously.[503] The downside of this plan was of course the sacking of non-essential workers, and his disregard for them would certainly haunt him later when the unemployed joined the left opposition in 1923 in protest, but Kamenev understood that the party could not win over

[499] RGASPI 324/1/540/6g.
[500] On Bagdanov's 'collectivism', see Sochor, p. 136-140.
[501] RGASPI 323/2/124/117.
[502] RGASPI 323/2/122/25.
[503] RGASPI 323/2/124/118-119.

everyone to the state with one policy. It was a gradual process. His plan was accepted on 1 July at the III Moscow Guberni Congress of Soviets, with the CC approving it on 8 August.[504]

Notwithstanding Bogdanov and Kamenev's common desire to change worker psychology through non-capitalist means, there was to be no alignment of forces between them as had been in pre-revolutionary days. Kamenev never endorsed Bogdanov's *Proletkult* because it was specifically created as a non-governmental organisation. Kamenev wanted the state to become the vehicle for the spreading of proletarian culture because if the proletariat's collectivism became ingrained within the state apparatus, Kamenev hoped it would unify the whole of society, the peasantry, workers, and intellectuals. He therefore fundamentally disagreed with Bogdanov's approach. Zenovia Sochor chalks the party's discord with Bogdanov's *Proletkult* up to Lenin's principles and the party's desire to maintain control.[505] Kamenev proves there was an additional ideological disagreement preventing cooperation.

One main problem with Kamenev's vision was that the brutal and repressive measures of War Communism had greatly eroded trust between the party and the masses. Therefore, as he had expressed during the civil war, Kamenev pressed Communists to repudiate any notion that War Communism had anything to do with socialism. He denounced War Communism as a system of economic 'anarchy', and criticised forced requisitioning as an 'act of banditry'.[506] He also struck at the party left agitating for egalitarian principles in resistance to NEP, labelling their policy to be 'for demagogues and anarchists'.[507] Protecting peasant interests, he called the party left

[504] RGASPI 323/2/122/22.
[505] Sochor, p. 150.
[506] RGASPI 323/2/122/15.
[507] RGASPI 323/2/129/68.

utopian for trying to implement socialism immediately, declaring openly and ardently that *communism could not be built in one country*.[508]

This did not mean that Kamenev was adverse to the misgivings of the party left. His desire for party balance and centrism forced him to publically state NEP was a 'manoeuvre', something he did not believe. In a telling letter to Lenin he made it clear it was not 'manoeuvre' at all. Writing about the difficulties he had in the VTsIK, he declared:

> 'It is embarrassing to say out loud that all these measures are not serious and only a trial. We can say it between ourselves, to members of the rank and file and others, but today in the presidium it was difficult to carry it through because I did not have the right to completely tell them the motives, and they demanded to know if these are "manoeuvres" or if they are real. It is even more embarrassing to say that these are just manoeuvres in public *decrees*'[509] (emphasis in the original).

Left-wing party members remained hopeful that Lenin's utopian *April Theses* would prove the party's maximalist policy, but Kamenev was more of a realist and understood that in a predominantly peasant country the best course was to build a socialist foundation which aimed to unite the peasantry and the working class to the party and state in anticipation of future revolutions abroad.

The Bourgeois-Communist Alliance

What further separated Trotsky, Stalin, Lenin, and Zinoviev from Kamenev was how he wished to resolve class conflict. Kamenev adhered to what Lassalle wrote on morality in a working class state, 'that *its* interest is the interest of the entire human race,' aspiring in mass

[508] *Protokoly X s"ezda RKP(b)*, Moscow: Partiinoe izdatel'stvo, 1933, p. 458-459.
[509] RGASPI 323/2/160/Undated letter.

unison to *create* a union between all aspects of society, not to *destroy* class differences.[510] It was to be a gradual process in which proletarian morality enveloped all, not a perpetual conflict in which the working class stamped out its rivals. Nothing exemplifies this Lassallean characteristic more in Kamenev than when he led the effort to befriend the bourgeoisie to alleviate the terrible famine gripping the Volga region.

During the summer of 1921 between 60-70 million puds of grain from the Volga region had been lost due to drought induced crop failure.[511] The country desperately needed to import grain to cover the shortfall. Gorky and Kamenev put forward a plan deeply resented by the party rank and file to forge an alliance with the bourgeoisie to get foreign aid.[512] Despite party backlash, on 29 June the Politburo approved the establishment of the All-Russian Famine Relief Committee (VKPG), assigning Kamenev as its chair and Rykov his deputy.[513] Kamenev's sincere desire to aid the starving and promise of no retaliation won over the Kadet E.D. Kuskova to work with the Communists on 3 July.[514] Other Communist moderates joined the committee, namely A.I. Sviderskii, Lunacharsky, and P. Smidovich. Kuskova brought with her former Kadet party members, *zemstvo* leaders, and Duma deputies. A bourgeois-Communist alliance was born.[515]

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[510] Lassalle, *The Working Man's Programme*, p. 55.
[511] *Izvestiya*, July 26, 1921, p. 1.
[512] N.A. Semashko lobbied the Politburo on behalf of the party's discontent. He wanted to forbid the inclusion of representatives of the bourgeoisie in VKPG to prevent it from becoming a springboard for anti-Soviet agitation. See V.A.Polyakov, 'Rossiiskaya obshchestvennost' i inostrannaya pomoshch' golodaushchim v 1921 g.' in *Voprosy Istorii*, no. 12, Moscow, 2009, p. 6.
[513] *Istochnik: dokumenty russkoi istorii*, no. 16, 1995, p. 53. As Stuart Finkel points out, the committee included numerous moderate Communists, including Litvinov. See Stuart Finkel, *On the Ideological Front: The Russian Intelligentsia and the Making of the Soviet Public Sphere*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.
[514] Benjamin M. Weissman, *Herbert Hoover and Famine Relief to Soviet Russia, 1921-1923*, USA: Hoover Institution Publications, 1974, p. 13.
[515] Polyakov, p. 5. For a detailed list of the committee's non-communist participants, see Finkel, p. 20.

Kamenev proved that some form of limited political cooperation with the bourgeoisie was possible. During its brief two month existence it secured over 350 million rubles of foreign aid.[516] Further, the agreement it made with Herbert Hoover of the American Relief Administration (ARA) on 1 August fed a million children a day.[517] Although the bourgeoisie had no influence domestically as the VTsIK's 'Pomgol' (*pomoshch' golodayushchim* - 'Famine Relief') directed the distribution of the acquired aid, it was a positive first step of cooperation.[518]

Roger Pethybridge has shown that Lenin portrayed an image of tolerance as a ruse to get temporary foreign aid,[519] but he failed to adequately assess Kamenev's motives. To Kamenev the alliance was not a subterfuge. In *Izvestiya* on 4 August Kamenev put his Communist reputation on the line and *publically defended* the bourgeois VKPG members.[520] Kamenev was a Communist who truly believed there were issues where even class enemies could find common ground, but Lenin's line easily triumphed over Kamenev's when Kuskova and her supporters requested their members be allowed to travel abroad to secure further aid. The party feared some form of intrigue against the state and under Lenin's direction the Politburo voted on 18 August to deny their request.[521] On 26 August Dzerzhinsky and I.S. Unshlikht pressed Lenin to take further action and arrest the committee members.[522] Speaking on behalf of the moderate camp, Krasin and Chicherin advised Lenin to allow VKPG members go abroad to boost the country's image

[516] Finkel, p. 31.
[517] *Izvestiya,* no. 182, August 31, 1921, p. 1.
[518] There is even evidence to suggest Pomgol was created deliberately to curtail the workings of VKPG to minimise its role. See Polyakov, p. 20.
[519] Roger Pethybridge, *One Step Backwards, Two Steps Forward: Soviet Society and Politics in the New Economic Policy,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, p. 114.
[520] *Izvestiya,* no. 170, August 4, 1921, p. 2.
[521] *Istochnik: dokumenty russkoi istorii,* no. 16, 1995, p. 54.
[522] Polyakov, p. 19.

for tolerance,[523] but Lenin had no mind to allow any political concessions, and when he heard news that one of VKPG's members had given an anti-Soviet speech, he had his excuse to close VKPG immediately and arrested the committee's non-communists.[524] With Kamenev and Gorky's attempt to create a Communist–bourgeois alliance a failure, the recourse to repress the bourgeoisie became common practice.

A 'party which does not have the masses behind them will always resort to terror'

In the search for a solution to grain shortages the views of Lenin and Kamenev diverged sharply. At the end of 1921 when the worst of the peasant hardships was abating, Kamenev was eager to find a solution to prevent future suffering. Dying peasants were certainly not going to see the state as their own. The Commissar of Finance, Sokol'nikov, proposed to allow foreigners a role in the export trade in exchange for much needed food provisions. Lenin vehemently opposed the idea as a complete abrogation of the state's monopoly on foreign trade. Writing to Kamenev on 3 March 1922, Lenin declared that 'it is the greatest mistake to think that NEP put an end to terror. We shall return to terror, and to economic terror.'[525] Lenin continued that with threat of violence the bourgeoisie would trade more honestly, and that terror and arrests within the Foreign Trade Commissariat would provide such a motivation. Stalin and Bukharin had been prepared to back Sokol'nikov's plan, but when Trotsky allied with Lenin in mid-December 1922, followed shortly by Zinoviev, the CC majority backed the party leader.[526]

[523] Finkel, p. 33.
[524] Polyakov, p. 20.
[525] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 44, p. 428.
[526] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 45, p. 339.

Historians such as Robert Conquest have quoted Lenin's line above about terror to illustrate Lenin's unbending resistance to any attempt to diminish Communist authority,[527] but what he and other historians have failed to analyse was the significance of *to whom* Lenin was writing. This letter was not to Trotsky, Stalin, or Bukharin, but to Kamenev. Kamenev was pursuing alternatives to coercion and Lenin was critical of any compromise.

Kamenev would not let the matter rest. He was determined to curb what Lenin, Zinoviev, and Trotsky relied on most to maintain Communist supremacy and what their opponents most detested, the Cheka. On 1 July at the III Moscow Guberni Congress of Soviets, Kamenev complained that they were stuck in a vicious circle, and that a 'party which does not have the masses behind them will always resort to terror…'[528] To escape the cycle of violence Kamenev urged that if instead of coercion the Communists improved the economic position of the masses, support for the party would follow.[529] Of course, similar to Lenin Kamenev felt that strong authority was essential to keep the threat of white guard counter-revolution at bay, but it was out of necessity, not as a matter of policy. He was ready to move beyond just holding power, and clearly following Lassalle more than Marx, felt that with the continual use of terror they would never reach socialism.

Kamenev was seriously committed to the idea that the party had to win round opponents, not simply repress them. He therefore helped imprisoned intellectuals, and was so esteemed by non-party intellectuals that he was often approached by the Union of Writers and House of

[527] See Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-famine*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 60.
[528] RGASPI 323/2/122/13-14 uncorrected stenogram.
[529] RGASPI 323/2/122/51.

Litterateurs to save them from Cheka persecution.[530] Kamenev found an ally in the Commissar of Justice D.I. Kurskii and together on 1 December 1921 they had Fedor Dan and other prominent Mensheviks released from prison.[531] Kamenev also successfully lobbied Lenin to allow Alexander Blok to go abroad for medical treatment.[532] Lunacharsky and Gorky were among Kamenev's close allies, but Bukharin had deserted their camp.

Kamenev's solution to Cheka arbitrariness was 'socialist legality', a phrase he used to describe the new Soviet legal system by which every organisation, including the Cheka, was to be subjected. By ending the Cheka's independence, Kamenev hoped to develop 'trust' with the masses. There were others who wanted the same thing, such as Kurskii, and the chair of the Revolutionary Tribunal, N.V. Krylenko. Together they pressed Lenin to place the Cheka under the purview of the Commissariat of Justice, where revolutionary tribunals would decide punishment under the branch of the Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD). The Cheka would remain responsible for apprehending those engaging in political crimes, spying, and banditry, but were to do nothing more.[533] Believing that such a change would make the Politburo and Sovnarkom more responsible for the Cheka's irregularities, Lenin responded to Kamenev on 29 November 1921, writing that now 'I am closer to you than to Dzerzhinsky,'[534] The Politburo then appointed Kamenev, Kurskii, Dzerzhinsky, and later Stalin, to a commission which dissolved the

[530] Finkel p. 96.
[531] A.N. Artizov, et al., eds., "*Ochistim Rossiyu nadol'go…": Repressii protiv inakomyslyashchikh, Konetz 1921 – nachalo 1923 g.*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Materik", 2008, p. 19.
[532] *Istochnik: document russkoi istorii,* no. 2, 1995, p. 40.
[533] Artizov, p. 521.
[534] Ibid., p. 19.

Cheka into the NKVD to become the State Political Administration (GPU), where on paper its authority was greatly reduced.[535]

However, Lenin's commitment was hardly sincere. What seemed a great success considering Kamenev's four year struggle in restricting the Cheka in favour of a proper legal criminal code proved inadequate. Having the GPU and the NKVD headed simultaneously by one man, Dzerzhinsky, did nothing to provide effective GPU oversight. Lenin was committed to terror to defeat opponents; it was his best political weapon, and in private he pushed the deputy chairman of the GPU, I.S.Unshlikht to ignore the reform and to continue to carry out executions of arrested bandits and retain his Cheka personnel. Lenin also mandated Kurskii to incorporate 'terror' into the civil code.[536] Kamenev and Lenin were trying to forge a socialist state, but with vastly different means to the same end; one utilising terror, the other aspiring some form of 'socialist legality'.

Kamenev's pursuit of bridging the gap between the masses, the party, and the state did have a darker side. After the adoption of a new legal code, the CC wanted to illustrate the change by prosecuting the Central Committee of the Socialist Revolutionaries in the Supreme Tribunal for acts of terrorism they had committed in 1918. Julie A. Cassiday has shown that the main purpose of the SR show trial was to connect the masses directly with the legal proceedings in an effort to display both the legality of the new system and foster a positive connection between the

[535] V.N. Khastov, V.P. Naumov, and N.S. Plotnikov, eds., *Lubyanka: Stalin i VCHK-GPU-OGPU-NKVD, Yanvar' 1922 – dekabr' 1936,* Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Materik", 2003, p. 11-12.

[536] It could no longer hold prisoners longer than two months without permission from the VTsIK and those arrested had to be told their offenses within two weeks of arrest. Furthermore, revolutionary tribunals decided sentencing. For Lenin's commitment to the Cheka, see Robert Service, *Lenin: A Political Life, Volume III, The Iron Ring*, London: Macmillan LTD., 1995, p. 243-244.

state and the populous.[537] Kamenev felt it a worthy cause and began to work with Stalin and Dzerzhinsky 28 December 1921 to ascertain the opportune moment in which to stage the trial.[538] When in August 1922 the SR leader, A.R. Gotz, refused to recant his determination to overturn Bolshevik power in exchange for freedom, the sentence was death. Lenin pressed for the verdict to be carried out, but Kamenev led the majority to keep the sentence in abeyance as a warning to SRs remaining in Soviet Russia that the sentence could be carried out if they tried to move against the state.[539] As the trial's purpose was to tout the new legal code to legitimise 'socialist legality', Kamenev had never wanted the SR leaders' execution. In 1921 he had commuted Moscow clergy prison sentences in exchange for declarations of loyalty,[540] and there is no reason to believe he did not now desire the same for the SRs. However, when the SRs refused to endorse the state Kamenev could not support a change of course because it would have shown the state's arbitrary rule, the very opposite of what Kamenev wanted. He was trapped in a position of his own making and the minimum he could do was to persuade his peers to postpone execution.

To truly understand the difference between Kamenev and his peers on state repression, it is best to compare him to his Politburo colleagues. His counterpart Zinoviev in Petrograd spearheaded the anti-Soviet intellectual campaign at the August XII Party Conference, had a heavy hand in dealing with dissenting opinions in Petrograd, and continuously supported Lenin's call for terror. Stalin's brutal repression of the Mensheviks in Georgia in 1921 showed that he too favoured violence to achieve political ends. Like Lenin, Stalin had little regard for 'socialist

[537] Julie A. Cassiday, 'Marble Colums and Jupiter Lights: Theatrical Modeling of Soviet Show Trials in the 1920s', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 42.4, 1998, p. 642-648.
[538] Artizov, p. 23.
[539] For Kamenev's account and his disagreement with capital punishment, see RGASPI 323/2/20/83, for Lenin's commitment to execution, see Service, *Lenin: A Political Life, Volume III,* p. 248.
[540] Finkel, p. 299.

legality'. When CC member I.A. Zelinkski's brother came into conflict with authorities, Stalin oversaw his execution without court approval. He coldly conveyed to Zinoviev, 'It was necessary to shoot him without a trial, in order for there to be no noise.'[541] Trotsky's commitment to violence for political ends outweighed even Stalin's at the time. He had a record for ordering mass shootings in the civil war, publically spoke about the need to repress intellectuals in peace time, and pursued a merciless repression policy against the church.

There is not a single document to be found with Kamenev's signature ever calling for the death of anyone. In June 1922 he served on a commission with Unshlikht and Kurskii to deport suspected doctors, professors, and other 'anti-Soviet intelligentsia', but that was a far cry from murder.[542] Kamenev greatest fault was his complicity in remaining in the party despite the repressive measures to which he objected, but that is why his views can still be considered Bolshevik. For better or worse it was his party, and he tried to lead it away from repression, but his peers were determined to rule through force.

The State and the Party – Kamenev and Stalin

Kamenev's remarkable ability to simultaneously manage multiple state functions earned him the confidence of Lenin, who asked Kamenev to effectively become the new link between the Politburo and Sovnarkom. Kamenev had been helping Lenin draw up the country's legal framework ever since he had penned the NEP legislation.[543] He had become so valuable that Lenin wrote to Kamenev on 26 October 1921 that he thought that 'it would be better to put you

[541] RGASPI 323/2/27/6.
[542] Khastov, Naumov, and Plotnikov, p. 44.
[543] In fact, according to Lunacharsky, rarely was a law published from Sovnarkom that Kamenev did not write. See Lunacharsky, Radek, Trotksky, p. 299.

on Sovnarkom officially.'[544] This was a direct affront to Rykov and A.D. Tsyurupa, who were Lenin's official deputy chairs in Sovnarkom and STO, but Lenin saw fit to include Kamenev because they lacked Kamenev's administrative abilities. In fact, Lenin complained after returning from his illness at the XI Party Congress 27 March 1922, that 'when I had to leave it turned out that two wheels do not work in tune and Kamenev had to triple his workload in order to uphold these connections.'[545] Lenin thus selected Kamenev to be in charge of government affairs.[546] For the party, he chose Stalin, who Zinoviev and Kamenev had the CC appoint its General Secretary on 3 April 1922. Thus by the end of 1922 Kamenev and Stalin were in effect the heads of the state and party.

T.H. Rigby has maintained that Kamenev essentially shared state leadership with Rykov, but Rigby is wrong.[547] Although Kamenev did not become an official deputy chair of Sovnarkom until 6 July 1923, he had in fact already assumed the post alongside Lenin as early as late 1921. Eleven days after his Sovnarkom appointment, Kamenev also became a member of STO, and in 1924, its chair. The fact that STO was an all-union post, one which set economic policies for the *entire* Soviet Union and not just Russia, meant that Rykov was more restricted in setting policy and therefore played a junior role to Kamenev. Stalin's secretary, Boris Bazhanov, duly noted Kamenev's supremacy over Rykov at the time.[548]

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[544] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 53, p. 309.
[545] *Odinadtsatyi s"ezd RKP(b) mart-april' 1922 goda*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1961, p. 43.
[546] Robert McNeal, *Stalin: Man and Ruler*, New York: New York University Press, 1988, p. 67.
[547] T.H. Rigby, 'The Government in the Soviet Political System', in *Executive Power and Soviet Politics: The Rise and Decline of the Soviet State*, ed., Eugene Huskey, New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1992, p. 17.
[548] Boris Bazhanov, *Bazhanov and the Damnation of Stalin*, trans., David W. Doyle, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1990, p. 64.

Rigby correctly noted that although the Politburo set general policy, Lenin had tried to ensure that Sovnarkom, not the Politburo, directed state affairs. The party was not supposed to be bogged down with day-to-day administration. It distributed power, but the party itself did not wield it through the Politburo. Kamenev had great leeway in managing the Soviet economy through STO and Sovnarkom. He further had great influence as head of the MPO and the Moscow Soviet. Zhores Medvedev has argued that in party matters he even had more influence than Stalin, but this is an exaggeration.[549]

Other leading Communists did not wield as much authority as Stalin or Kamenev. Bukharin was the chief editor of *Pravda,* but he commanded no official posts. Like Trotsky, he had party influence, but Bukharin had even less authority than his counterpart for being outside the state apparatus altogether. He was a theorist, not a leader.

Trotsky had a powerful position as the People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs, but it was limited. For example, Kamenev's position directing the economy in STO touched every aspect of Soviet life, including the military, and as the General Secretary, Stalin determined the party make-up throughout the entire system. Trotsky had input on general policy through his Politburo post, but Kamenev had this *in addition* to his all-union authority and his rule of Moscow. The military's primary purpose was to protect the Soviet state from foreign aggression. Steven Kotkin has shown that historians have overestimated Trotsky's influence based on Lenin's 24 December 1922 'Letter to the Congress'. The letter indicated that Trotsky was of such prominence that a party rupture between him and Stalin could occur if not

[549] Zhores A. Medvedev and Roy A. Medvedev, *The Unknown Stalin,* New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2003, p. 252.

contained,[550] but new evidence indicates that the letter was most likely a forgery.[551] This casts serious doubt as to the reach of Trotsky's influence.

As for Zinoviev, he was the symbol of the international proletariat as head of the Comintern, but in terms of domestic policy his influence was limited to Petrograd and his Politburo position. Zinoviev followed Kamenev's lead. Molotov recalled, Zinoviev:

> '…sang Kamenev's tune, so to speak… Zinoviev was cowardly; Kamenev had character. He actually guided Zinoviev. But Zinoviev was considered superior to Kamenev, who was merely his assistant or advisor. Zinoviev was the chief. Not a theoretician but a politician.'[552]

Zinoviev therefore never had a chance to fill Lenin's shoes. Kamenev and Stalin thus sharply stood out as a duumvirate overseeing the state and party.

The Unity of State and Society

By the end of 1922 and the beginning of 1923 the countryside was still reeling from the famine and industrial output was still far below its pre-war levels. Party support had diminished among the working class and the party had made few inroads with the peasantry.[553] In fact, the vast majority of the population remained bereft of political agency, a consequence of Lenin's institutionalised abrogation of politics.

At the March 1923 X Moscow Guberni Party Conference Kamenev first publicly expressed his thoughts concerning the 'dictatorship of the party', long before Zinoviev mentioned

[550] George Fyson, *Lenin's Final Fight: Speeches and Writings, 1922-1923*, New York: Pathfinder, 1995, p. 182.
[551] Kotkin, chapter 11.
[552] Chuev and Resis, p. 105.
[553] Pethybridge, p. 149-151.

it in 1925.[554] Kamenev's statement was not motivated by dissatisfaction with how Stalin was using the Secretariat to impede intra-party democracy, but rather because he felt the state, not the party, should be the vehicle for socialist transformation. He therefore advocated the amalgamation of the party and state to reach the masses, and as will be shown, this played a critical factor in aiding Stalin's rise to power.

Kamenev outlined at the April 1923 XII Party Congress that the party needed to use state institutions as a kind of sounding-board for policy directives to establish an indirect dialogue. He felt that the working class viewed themselves and their government as two distinctly different entities, and if the non-party workers would not come to the party, the party would have to come to them through state institutions.[555] The implication was that the party would become more diversified in its approach to decision making, taking into account the peasantry and differing worker views to form a more comprehensive organisation and conduct policy which would gain the trust the state needed to create a broader sense of community.

Since various groups were denied the ability to represent their views politically, Kamenev was rather naïve to believe that the party would be able to act benevolently and truly listen to grievances. There was no institutional check to prevent the party from simply dictating directives by a show of force in the face of resistance. The party was certainly not going to allow workers or peasants the right to determine policy.

That ship had already sailed when the leadership rejected the part of Lenin's 1922 plan to have 75-100 workers and peasants read all documents and determine the agenda of the Politburo

[554] RGASPI 323/2/20/100.
[555] RGASPI 223/2/20/106.

in a reorganised Central Control Commission (CCC).[556] At the II Congress of the Communist Party of Georgia 14 March, Kamenev had endorsed Lenin's idea that 'the leadership of the CC' would be held accountable to the CCC, but he obviously backpedalled when his peers rejected the idea.[557] While the CCC did combine with the state's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate (Rabkrin) in hopes of maintaining an ideological hold over state organs, it never had any power over the Politburo. Therefore a true dialogue was not on the agenda.

This therefore raises the question as to whether Kamenev remained an adherent of Lassalle. Lassalle had indicated that the proletarian state came first and then it worked to win over opponents. For Kamenev to admit that the country was a 'dictatorship of the party' and then espouse that the state should win over both workers and the peasantry disregarded the Lassallean belief that proletarian culture was the impetus for breaking down divisions between classes. Kamenev was constrained under the one-party dictatorship and was adapting Lassalle's concept of the state to the current situation. He envisioned that the party could serve as a temporary replacement for genuine proletarian values and bring the masses to accept the state as their own. This was why Kamenev was the only Politburo member who contemplated worker and peasant supervision of the CC and outright supported Lenin's desire to combine the CCC and Rabkrin to ensure state adherence to party principles from the very beginning. His long-term goal was to merge the party, the people, and the state into one governing body.

One of the main ways Kamenev hoped to win over the peasantry through 'state capitalism' was to modify its tax code and reform the country's monetary system. His Marxist

[556] E.A. Rees, *State Control in Soviet Russia: The Rise and Fall of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate, 1920-34,* Birmingham: Macmillan Press, 1987, p. 46-47.
[557] Lev Kamenev, *Ocherednye zadachi kompartii Gruzii: doklad pervom zasedanii 11-go s"ezda kompartii Gruzii 14 Marta 1923,* Tiflis: Izdatel'stvo krasnaya kniga, 1923, p. 37.

thinking was simple, improve the economic condition of the working class and the peasantry and gain their support - economics determined politics.[558] The Commissar of Finance, Sokol'nikov, together with Kamenev and Kalinin asserted that the brunt of taxes should fall on the slim stratum of bourgeois traders, not peasants or workers.[559] The state had to tax the peasants less than under the Tsar, or else they would not gain their support, and so the three proffered to decrease the peasant tax by a third. With the desire to continue the change in currency from the near worthless *sovznak* (soviet currency) to the *chervonets* (rubles based on gold), which Kamenev had initiated through Sovnarkom on 11 October 1922, Kamenev and Sokol'nikov now advanced they end the 'tax-in-kind' altogether and move to a 'monetary tax', permanently ending the requisitioning of grain and providing peasants with a rationally progressive unified direct tax which would reduce peasant confusion and resentment over having to pay three different kinds of taxes.[560] The danger of a single tax was that soviet institutions could not make new taxes to bail out fiscally inept ones, but the benefits of gaining peasant trust and a desire to raise demand for the new *chervonets* and increase its circulation outweighed their concerns.

There were those in the party who did not share Kamenev's vision of the 'dictatorship of the party' under NEP. To the party at large the Soviet system was considered a proletarian state in every sense of the word. No one spoke out against Kamenev at the XII Party Congress more on this issue than Y. Larin. Since February of 1921 he had been denouncing NEP as a 'policy of coalition' akin to Kerensky's bourgeois-socialist ministry in 1917.[561] At the XII Party Congress

[558] RGASPI 323/2/20/140.
[559] RGASPI 323/2/122/89.
[560] The peasantry essentially paid three taxes: the 'tax-in-kind', the expropriation of grain by the state, the household and civil tax, which served local guberniia needs, and local soviet taxes which often were arbitrary in execution and in violation of the law. See *XII s"ezda RKP(b), 17-25 aprelya 1923 goda,* p. 462.
[561] RGASPI 324/1/540/6v.

he charged Kamenev's direction as a 'peasant deviation', worried their misguided direction would alienate the proletariat. Disgruntled workers, either unemployed or disheartened, were beginning to join the 'Workers' Truth', a left-minded proletarian group which demanded worker needs trump peasant concerns.[562] From conferences to congresses, Kamenev tried to draw the left's attention to the pre-1917 Bolshevism which had desired to work with the peasantry.[563] However, the left had no desire to accept the 'other', the peasantry, as having any right to determine state direction. Larin, for example, wanted to increase, not decrease, the tax on the struggling peasantry by a startling 20 percent.

Kamenev also faced opposition from Krasin and N. Osinski, both of whom found fault with increasing party influence within the state apparatus through the merging of the CCC and Rabkrin into the CCC-Rabkrin. From the party right, Krasin complained that effective planning was best left to well-trained economists and bourgeois specialists.[564] The former Democratic Centralist, N. Osinskii, wished to place decision making in the hands of the VTsIK and the soviets, not the party. He argued that local institutions had greater cohesion in comparison with the departmentalised central organs.

With the aid of Zinoviev and Sokol'nikov, again Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' came to the fore as he tried to find a centrist platform. As had become typical of Kamenev, he made some concessions, but this time only to Krasin and Larin. His concession to Larin was rather minimal as it was simply not to yield completely to Krasin's policy demands, but he conceded Krasin's point that the CC should not interfere with the practical daily work of the commissariats

[562] RGASPI 323/2/20/137.
[563] *XII s''ezda RKP(b), 17-25 aprelya 1923 goda,* p. 426.
[564] Ibid., p. 155.

and that their decisions should be reviewed in corresponding economic organs, but felt that Krasin's call for division in policy making was inadvisable; uncontrolled economic organs would allow bourgeois specialists to direct policy.[565] As for Osinskii's group Kamenev spared no words in denouncing it as a 'revision of Leninism' and a 'Menshevik-liquidationist view' for their Democratic Centralist desire to 'be emancipated from the leadership of the party'.[566] His unwillingness to relinquish authority to more democratic organs was terribly irregular for Kamenev, but his belief that the state was under the 'dictatorship of the party' explains why he was so averse to Osinskii. A democratic state that was not intrinsically proletarian would not move towards socialism.

It is critical to note that both Osinskii and Krasin were urging a delineation of duties between the state and the party, and that it was Kamenev who led the debate to reject their proposals to instead solidify the connection between the party and state. Kamenev's desire to bridge the gap between the state and society by means of ceding government authority to the party is paramount in understanding the demise of Sovnarkom as a decision-making body. T.H. Rigby has attributed Lenin's illness and departure from the government as the main cause of Sovnarkom's decline, and Roger Pethybridge has illustrated the drive of the party to curb the problems (tax collecting, administering justice, peasant influence in the soviets, etc…) in the localities and their inability to cope with administering NEP as the cause for centralisation along party lines. Robert Service points to the bottom-up demand for efficiency as well as Stalin's heavy-handedness in the Secretariat in shifting power into the hands of the party.[567] Yet the

[565] RGASPI 323/2/20/121.
[566] RGASPI 323/2/20/107.
[567] Pethybridge, p. 185-187.

critical factor presented in this chapter which must be taken into account equally to the ones enumerated above was that the very person Lenin selected to oversee state institutions *voluntarily* began to relinquish its authority to the party on theoretical principle. Out of a hope to connect the party to the masses by combining the state and party, Kamenev drove power right into Stalin's hands by spurning Osinkii and Krasin's wish to divorce the party from state decision making.

Kamenev's error was that was he focusing most of his attention on working with Sokol'nikov to win the 'trust' of the peasantry and was not mindful of how Stalin was managing the party. Kamenev's great achievement at the XII Party Congress was that the congress approved his and Sokol'nikov's plan to continue the usage of the gold backed currency to stabilise the economy against a continuously depreciating *sovznak,* and in the resolution on the 'Basic Position of the Financial Programme', the party supported Kamenev and Sokol'nikov's call for an end to the 'tax-in-kind'. On 10 May both the VTsIK and Sovnarkom decreed the single agricultural tax into law.

Against Trotsky

Nothing puts the concept of Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' to the test more than when he worked together with Stalin and Zinoviev in the so-called 'troika' to defeat Trotsky. Valentina Vilkova explains Kamenev's actions as motivated by an ambition for power.[568] Chris Ward believes that Kamenev and Zinoviev 'followed no clearly identifiable political line',[569] whilst Stephen Kotkin explains Kamenev's actions as those of an 'inveterate intriguer'.[570] These interpretations show a lack of knowledge of Kamenev's goals and ideas and grossly misrepresent

[568] Valentina Vilkova, *The Struggle for Power: Russia in 1923*, New York: Prometheus Books, 1996, p. 18.
[569] Ward, p. 32.
[570] Kotkin, chapter 11.

him. E.H. Carr depicted Kamenev more accurately, writing that he 'was a man of sincerely held beliefs, which were remarkably free from any admixture whether of personal ambition or of political calculation.'[571] The truth was that Kamenev acted as he did because his centrist NEP position clashed with both Trotsky's super-industrialisation proposals and his refusal to work collectively.

Trotsky and Preobrazhensky's alternative to Kamenev and Sokol'nikov's 'finance dictatorship' was 'Primitive Socialist Accumulation', an industrialisation program in which the peasant was treated as a colony, whereby the state would take the revenue from agricultural exports to finance rapid industrialisation. In this scenario, workers would also be called to sacrifice, for the state would strip them of part of their wages for the monumental industrialisation drive. Trotsky believed that that the path to socialism mandated a significant increase in labour productivity, whatever the immediate social cost.[572] To carry out this undertaking, Trotsky envisioned that the State Planning Committee (Gosplan) would serve as the legislative economic planning organ to lead, direct, and plan the economy.[573]

There was thus a clash of ideas. The kind of exploitation Trotsky proposed was going to destroy any 'trust' the masses had in the government, but Trotsky was confident of his policy because he viewed the Soviet Union as a proletarian state. Kamenev completely and utterly disagreed, and with his desire to bring the masses into a feeling of common community through state enterprise that neither favoured peasant over worker or worker over peasant, he fought against him. Kamenev and Sokol'nikov's NEP centrist plan to gain the trust of both workers and

[571] Carr, *Socialism in One Country: 1924-1926: Volume I,* p. 176.
[572] Darron Hicks, 'Support for the Opposition in Moscow in the Party Discussion of 1923-1924', *Soviet Studies,* 44.1, 1992, p. 147.
[573] Geoffrey Swain, *Trotsky: Profiles in Power*, Malaysia: Pearson Education Limited, 2006¸ p. 138.

the peasantry by increasing their living standard was the complete opposite of Trotsky's plan of exploitive industrialisation. Furthermore, Trotsky's Gosplan relied on bourgeois specialists for making economic projections. In a proletarian state, such an entity would be held in check by the populous itself. In a non-proletarian state, the specialists would direct the economy to capitalism. That was why the party's role in overseeing the state's economic institutions, which Trotsky was so keen to avoid, was so valuable to Kamenev. The state was not proletarian and thus could not allow the bourgeoisie to plan economic development.

The clash of the two men's views began when Trotsky challenged Kamenev and Sokol'nikov over their desire to liberalize the monopoly on foreign trade in December 1922. Despite the terrible famine crisis, Trotsky and Lenin were adamant in opposing any relaxation of the foreign trade monopoly out of fear that bourgeois private traders would accrue wealth originally intended for the state.[574] Even allied with Zinoviev, Sokol'nikov, and Stalin, Kamenev was unable to overcome Trotsky, mainly due to Lenin's support.

Trotsky then went on the offensive, demanding that Gosplan supersede STO. He directly attacked Kamenev's position by maintaining that STO was incapable of directing cross departmental affairs as it was more a regulatory organ than an administrative one since in STO each commissariat focused on their own affairs. If STO were to lead at all, Trotsky proposed that due to the volume of work Kamenev should either choose to be the chair of the Moscow Soviet or a deputy in Sovnarkom, but not both.[575] Such a move would have removed Kamenev's role in

[574] One million is the conservative estimate. For the various figures on the death toll, see Betrand M. Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand: The American Relief Expedition to Soviet Russia in the Famine of 1921,* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002, p. 198.
[575] Yu. Fel'shtinskii, *Arkhiv Trotskogo: Kommunisticheskaya oppozitsiya v SSSR, 1923-1927,* vol. 1, Moscow: "Terra", 1990, p. 13.

directing state policy, if not ended it altogether. This would have also severed the Politburo-Sovnarkom link, separating economic planning and party decision making, exactly what Trotsky desired.

It is important to note that the initial response of Trotsky's Politburo opponents was conciliatory. Stalin proposed on 6 January 1923 that Trotsky become a deputy of STO. This would have enabled Trotsky to work alongside Kamenev in determining policy, but Trotsky rejected the post. Kamenev also tried to appease Trotsky by heeding his critique of STO. The CC agreed to reorganise STO on 4 July so that department deputies participated in STO affairs to collectively solve economic problems with a 'single directing organ' as Trotsky desired. Despite the concession, Trotsky remained adamant.[576] It was his way, or no way.

If this had been a single event, Kamenev would have respected Trotsky's tenacity as he had so many of his opponents, but Trotsky had a whole history with Kamenev in rejecting compromise. In 1912 Kamenev and his brother-in-law had a falling out working on the Vienna *Pravda* together when Trotsky had refused to adhere to the CC's line.[577] In October 1917 Trotsky and Lenin had jointly wrecked the Kamenev-led Vikzhel talks for a multi-party state. During the 1920 trade union debates Kamenev had brokered a meeting between Lenin and Trotsky to find compromise, but Trotsky had rejected it and insisted on taking the issue straight to the rank and file. On 11 April 1922 Lenin had proposed making Trotsky his deputy in Sovnarkom alongside Kamenev, but Trotsky had refused.[578] Not giving up, Lenin proposed on 2 September 1922 to

[576] RGASPI 17/2/100/3.
[577] See Chapter 1.
[578] Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed,* p.34-35.

have Trotsky head Sovnarkom and Kamenev STO. Even though this would have restricted Kamenev's authority, Kamenev agreed.[579] Trotsky, again, did not.[580]

With Trotsky continually pressing to undermine Kamenev's STO authority *without even the slightest interest in compromise*, Kamenev reluctantly allied with the man who most detested Trotsky – Stalin. The two were on amicable terms, and from among the Politburo Kamenev felt close to Stalin in a way that was second only to Zinoviev.[581] They had formed bonds in pre-revolutionary days working in Georgia and while living in exile together in Achinsk. As acting chair of the Politburo, Kamenev collaborated with Stalin and Kiubyshev in preparing the Politburo's agenda and thought he was a man with whom he could work.[582] Zinoviev was worried about keeping Trotsky in check and therefore followed Kamenev's lead, forming a 'troika' with Kamenev and Stalin in early 1923.

Yet none of this would have mattered if Stalin and Kamenev had not agreed on the present course of NEP and the role of the party, and this is where understanding Kamenev and his premise that the country was under a 'dictatorship of the party' is crucial. Kamenev supported the *idea* to expand the role of the party to safeguard against deviation. In a non-proletarian state where political dialogue was not possible, the 'dictatorship of the party' was the only thing holding the system together, and that meant elevating the importance of the party in state affairs. It was therefore out of theoretical understanding that he aligned with Stalin; it was not simply

[579] RGASPI 323/2/136/7.
[580] Trotsky was on holiday and claimed that he did not refuse, but asked for the discussion to be postponed. Stalin, he maintained, took his answer to be a refusal. See RGASPI 323/2/136/12-13.
[581] RGASPI 323/1/155/2-4.
[582] *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, no. 4, April, 1991 p. 204.

political. For his part, Stalin was more than willing to aggrandise the decision-making role of the party in the state apparatus to benefit his position.

Kamenev's alliance with Stalin to ensure the future dominance of the 'dictatorship of the party' in state affairs was what brought the dispute with Trotsky to an impasse at the September 23-25 CC plenum. At the meeting the majority decided to expand Trotsky's Revolutionary Military Council (RMC) to include more Communists. The decision was made without Trotsky, and he perceived it to be a step to diminish his influence. Although this was a consequence of the action, the primary goal was to expand party influence into all spheres of the state to maintain ideological control. The process had already begun with economic organs, and now the military, which retained numerous former Tsarist officers, was next.

Trotsky incorrectly assessed the move to be politically motivated against him personally and went on the offensive against the leadership, raising issues over the economy to put forward his repeatedly denied proposals for a state-regulated economy under Gosplan. He was of course being rather opportunistic. The economic policy of relying on pseudo-market forces had come into difficulty, creating the so-called 'scissors crisis'. With a monopoly on industrial products, trusts had brazenly demanded high prices for their goods. Simultaneously, peasants were flooding the market with their grain to capitalise on the new 'monetary tax' and had caused its value to plummet. Peasants then refused to sell their grain and turned to subsistence farming. To make matters worse, with the austerity measures of cutting off government capital to failing industries and Kamenev's own Moscow Soviet tightening its fiscal belt under his direction, the summer of 1923 saw worker strikes in both Petrograd and Moscow as wages were still 80% of pre-war levels. Industrial output was at a meager 35% of pre-war levels. Terrible working conditions were

the norm, a million were unemployed, and poor housing persisted. Many workers joined the anti-Communist Party 'Workers' Truth' and the 'Workers' Group', demanding a change in economic policy along a more proletarian line. By October, the 'scissors crisis' was at its peak, and on 8 October Trotsky sent a letter to CC members criticizing the leadership's economic policy and proposed Gosplan save the country by focusing on heavy industrialisation.

Trotsky's greatest mistake on 8 October was to attack the 'troika' as if they were one cohesive unit. In his letter he assailed Kamenev's economic policy, Zinoviev's role in the failed German revolution, and Stalin's Secretariat.[583] Had Trotsky struck out against Stalin and not Zinoviev and Kamenev, he may have had allies, for at the October CC plenum Kamenev was trying to figure out a way to reduce Stalin's authority, but could not find the moment to act.[584] Kamenev was well aware that by increasing the party's significance in state functions that Stalin's prominence in decision-making was rising. This troubled him, but Trotsky's assault on the leadership took precedence. Had Trotsky moved only on the Secretariat Kamenev would have played his role as the great party conciliator and leveraged Stalin and Trotsky against each other to maintain balance.

Trotsky's manoeuvre at a time of crisis won him the support of the party left. A coalition of various opposition members under the 'platform of the 46' echoed Trotsky's attack on 15 October, followed by former Democratic Centralists and Workers' Opposition members uniting in protest. Exasperated with Trotsky's refusal to compromise, Bukharin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Kalinin, Kamenev, Molotov, Rykov, Stalin and Tomskii rallied against him.

[583] *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, no 7, 1990, p. 176-189.
[584] RGASPI 323/2/26/11.

Kamenev's tolerant leadership was crucial for Trotsky to get a foothold in MPO. Nowhere else in the entire Soviet Union did the party face such upheaval as in Moscow, and that was because of Kamenev. In fact, Zinoviev had been so agitated at Kamenev's refusal to clamp down on dissent as mandated by the X Party Congress ban on factions that in a letter on 21 February 1922 he warned Kamenev that his toleration for a 'booming' 'free press' was giving rise to a left opposition.[585] In defiance to the party factional ban, Kamenev openly explained that opposition platforms were useful because they addressed legitimate social concerns and the party could steal their ideas without having to acknowledge any mistakes.[586] Had Kamenev been the 'inveterate intriguer' that Kotkin claims him to be, the left opposition in Moscow would have been as ineffectual as it was nearly everywhere else, but in Moscow the left opposition seized a third of the city's party cells.[587]

Further evidence against the argument that Kamenev was a supreme 'intriguer' was that the leadership was willing to compromise. Even though it invited criticism, on 7 November Zinoviev promised more party democracy.[588] Then, on 5 December Kamenev and Stalin acquiesced to allow Trotsky to take control of Gosplan.[589] Trotsky chose to throw the compromise back in Kamenev and Stalin's face by publishing in *Pravda* on 11 December his *New Course,* in which he used the CC decision on open discussion to unleash an attack on the Bolshevik 'old guard'. He called the apparatus of the party itself a faction and called for new leadership.

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[585] RGASPI 324/1/540/6g.
[586] RGASPI 323/2/66/60.
[587] RGASPI 323/2/64/117.
[588] However, it was not entirely sincere, as expelled party members were welcomed back into the party on the condition that they accepted the CC's policies. See RGASPI 323/2/64/16.
[589] *Izvestiya TsK KPSS,* no. 12, 1990 p. 170.

Kamenev clung to the 'old guard' because he understood that the party was divided into three major groups: workers, peasants, and intellectuals, further diversified by nationality and distance. In December 1923 Kamenev declared that due to this stratification the party was unable to function without the 'cement' of the old guard, because if the old Bolsheviks were unseated, the party would splinter into competing groups.[590] This thought of his was rather flawed. Considering that there were so many competing views within the party prior to 1917, there was no way to guarantee cohesion even among old party members. For example, Pyatakov had joined the party in 1912 and was in 1923 aiding Trotsky.

Despite intense debate, with Trotsky's absence in the party due to illness and the Moscow Committee remaining in the majority's hands, the opposition failed to take the XIII Party Conference 16-19 January. Coupled with Lenin's death on 21 January, the victors solidified their hold on the state and party. It was at this time Kamenev officially became the chair of STO on 30 January.[591] As the unofficial head of state, Kamenev delivered the opening address and economic report at the II All-Union Congress of Soviets on 1 February.[592]

What had ultimately ensured Trotsky's failure was not 'intrigue', but the success of Kamenev and Sokol'nikov's economic policies. Kamenev was able to boast at the XIII Party Congress 23-31 May that the economy was improving. In 1923 59% of the tax on the agricultural sector had been taken in monetary value, and with such progress the tax-in-kind was abolished altogether. The circulation of the *chervonets* increased dramatically without devaluing, from just

[590] RGASPI 323/2/66/45.
[591] Bazhanov, p. 64.
[592] Together with his colleagues, *Izvestiya* published Kamenev's picture for the first time and informed its readers of his new position. See *Izvestiya*, February 3, 1924, no. 32, p. 3.

3% circulation in January 1923 to 67.6% in May 1924.[593] The government did not have to print any of its devalued *sovznak* and on 7 March STO had introduced a new stable soviet currency to replace it.[594] The government no longer permitted the printing of additional currency to offset budget shortfalls.[595] The state had acquired a positive trade balance and saw a dramatic increase of funds, from 475 million rubles to 786 million.[596] By the May XIII Party Congress the 'scissors' were nearly closed, the country had its first stable currency, and Trotsky's pessimistic forecast that the NEP's current direction based on finance would deepen the economic crisis proved false.

Trotsky could have let sleeping dogs lie, but instead he again went on the offensive. In October of 1924 Trotsky published his collected works where his preface entitled, 'The Lessons of October', equated Zinoviev's actions in opposing the October Revolution and Kamenev's defiance to Lenin's *April Theses* to the failed revolution in Germany. The rank and file which had little knowledge of Zinoviev and Kamenev's vote against the October Revolution were now enlightened to the two's perceived treacherous transgression. This provoked Kamenev to retaliate against Trotsky. With Trotsky's persistent attempts to discredit them, Kamenev and Zinoviev went tit for tat with Trotsky in drudging up past perceived mistakes to fit present circumstances. On the 18 November Kamenev spoke before the Moscow Committee with his report 'Leninism or Trotskyism?', which later found publication in the anti-Trotsky 1925 collection of articles *For*

[593] *XIII s"ezda RKP(b), mai 1924 goda,* Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1963, p. 369.
[594] Alexander Baykov, *The Development of the Soviet Economic System: An Essay on the Experience of Planning in the USSR*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947, p. 91.
[595] RGASPI 17/2/128/9.
[596] R.W. Davies, *The Development of the Soviet Budgetary System*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958, p. 59.

Leninism.[597] In his article Kamenev enumerated all of Trotsky's pre-1917 non-Bolshevik behaviour, recounting his Menshevism and his numerous disagreements with Lenin, presenting Trotsky as a rightist Menshevik.[598] Stalin's 'Errors of Trotskyism' mirrored Kamenev's earlier criticisms, denouncing Trotsky's 'permanent revolution' for ignoring the peasantry.

This event earned Kamenev the reputation of an 'intriguer'. Intrigue it was because he planned the assault against Trotsky behind closed doors and collaborated with Stalin and Zinoviev to stonewall Trotsky at Politburo meetings with a united front by predetermining their joint position in advance,[599] but characteristic of his entire life to label him an 'inveterate intriguer', it most certainly was not. All the evidence leading up to this episode shows that Kamenev was a man of compromise and had made numerous attempts to accommodate Trotsky. Raising the bogey of Trotsky's 'Menshevism' and dubbing it 'Trotskyism' may have been as dirty a trick as Trotsky reminding the party of Kamenev and Zinoviev's misgivings about the October Revolution, but the essence of the conflict had meaning well beyond a simple struggle for power. Adam Ulam contends that when Kamenev and Zinoviev proposed on 4 January 1925 to remove Trotsky from the Politburo and to dismiss him from his post as chair of the RMC, Kamenev was acting for reasons of 'power' and out of 'vindictiveness'.[600] This is a gross exaggeration. Kamenev was prompted to such an action out of defence. Trotsky had demanded Kamenev leave his post as head of the Moscow Soviet or as head of STO and then later had relentlessly assailed him and his views in hopes of casting him out of the leadership forever.

[597] Stalin, Krupskaya, O.W. Kuusinen, Bukharin, and his allies Sokol'nikov and Zinoviev among others all contributed.
[598] Lev Kamenev, 'Leninism or Trotskyism', in *For Leninism*, London: Communist Party of Great Britain, 1925.
[599] See the letters of various party members acknowledging Kamenev's discussions to denounce Trotsky in Trotsky, 'K voprosy o proiskhozhdenii legendy o "Trotskizme"', *Byulletin Oppozitsii*, no. 9, 1930, p. 32-34.
[600] Ulam, p. 246.

Assigning Kamenev's motivation to be out of 'power' and 'vindictiveness' and seeing Trotsky as somehow the victim is an unfair double standard.

Stalin had a far more radical solution to contain Trotsky, and following his lead the majority rejected Zinoviev's proposal to exclude him from the Politburo. Stalin outlined his thinking to E.I. Kviring on 15 January in a letter, explaining that 'the majority think that by leaving Trotsky in the CC, Trotsky will be less dangerous in the Politburo than outside it... Personally, I side with the opinion of the majority.'[601] Under CC guidance the VTsIK removed him from his post as Commissar of the Military and Navy on 26 January 1925, replacing him with M.V. Frunze. Stalin and the majority understood that by removing Trotsky from his posts and by outnumbering him 6 to 1 in the Politburo, Trotsky was absolutely finished. Herein lay the significant difference between Kamenev and Zinoviev and Stalin. Kamenev had wanted to maintain the integrity of the theoretical line and the continuation of 'state capitalism' under NEP in its current state by ejecting Trotsky from the Politburo, but he did not have a problem with Trotsky continuing on in his position as the Commissar of War, *as the head of the entire armed forces of the country*. At a Politburo meeting 18 March 1926 Kamenev recounted the affair:

> '…and we said that until the congress Trotsky cannot be a member of the Politburo. Immediately we removed him from his post as chair of the Revolutionary Military Council together… *We* had then not a dispute with Trotsky on a soviet line, but on a party line, and from this party argument you made conclusions on the soviet line, moving towards his removal from his soviet post. *We thought that* it was wrong'[602] (emphasis in the original).

Leaving Trotsky as the Commissar of War showed that despite their ideological disagreements, Kamenev was willing to call him an ally in the Soviet sphere. True, the party would limit his

[601] *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, no. 8, Moscow, 1991 p. 183.
[602] *Stenogrammy zasedanii Politburo TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b) 1923-1938 gg.*, vol. 1, Moscow: Rosspen, 2007, p. 687.

influence by reviewing his work, but in essence, Kamenev trusted him. For his part, Stalin acted ruthlessly, desiring to incapacitate Trotsky permanently, depriving him of any real influence in the state and by narrowing his party role to the Politburo where outnumbered his opinions could be easily ignored. Of great significance, Stalin's group had also usurped VTsIK and Sovnarkom decision making in removing Trotsky from his commissariat post. Kamenev was therefore far more moderate and that was because his 'Bolshevik Centrism' left the door open for some form of conciliation. He had afforded his defeated opponent the possibility to continue on as War Commissar, as disagreement did not make one 'dangerous' to the Soviet state.

Yet Kamenev had only himself to blame for aiding Stalin in expanding the role of the party into state affairs and giving him the authority to act as he did. Although Kamenev had realized that by moving to completely join the party to the state apparatus the General Secretary would become even further entrenched, Trotsky's continued barrage against him had made putting a check on Stalin's accumulation of power impossible for the time being.

A New Understanding

The argument that Kamenev acted against Trotsky without a clear political or theoretical line is no longer tenable. Kamenev understood what his peers had not, that the country was under a 'dictatorship of the party' and not a 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. They were not building socialism, but safeguarding the state awaiting world revolution. Kamenev aspired to strengthen the role of the party over the state to reach the non-party populous to create a common community and to ensure that NEP concessions did not set the country adrift to capitalism. To reach his goal he forged an alliance with bourgeois elements, tried to end the arbitrary rule of the

Cheka, developed a new collective wage system for workers, and together with Sokol'nikov championed ruble reform to uplift the peasantry. Everything he did in this period was to gain the 'trust' of the masses. Yet, there was a terrible downside. By employing all his party and state positions to reach his goal of unifying state, party, and society, he essentially handed Stalin complete control over the country without a fight.

The charge that Kamenev was an 'inveterate intriguer' cannot be sustained. Within the MPO he was known for his toleration, and his willingness to hear out differing views allowed for the growth of a left opposition. In the dispute with Trotsky, Trotsky alone was irreconcilable. The leadership tried numerous times to appease him, but they were all in vain. Kamenev resorted to intrigue against Trotsky by establishing 'Trotskyism' only when Trotsky had employed the same method against him over his October 1917 errors, but this was not Kamenev's usual approach to resolving differences. It was an exception, and proving Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' survived the struggle Kamenev was prepared to work alongside Trotsky as an ally by letting him retain his post as the Commissar of War. Stalin and the majority were no longer willing to compromise.

CHAPTER 6

With the ending of the 'scissors crisis', the abating of the famine crisis, the stabilisation of the currency, the growth of industry and workers' wages nearing pre-war levels, the years 1924-1925 marked the first time the Communists had the opportunity to govern without a looming crisis. Stalin boldly proclaimed that the country could build 'socialism in one country', and Bukharin pushed forward with his rightist policies to extend NEP into the countryside in an effort to further stimulate economic growth. The Communist left which had been defeated protested Bukharin's policies, but with Trotsky side-lined in the Politburo they were left without a voice. The ruling 'troika' of Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin dissolved and the party's factions solidified, rigidly demarcating party left and right. Stalin used the Secretariat to stamp out debate in favour of Bukharin, but there remained numerous workers and party members disillusioned with NEP's capitalist elements. In these circumstances Kamenev struggled for a centrist position between the party left, and the party right, and in this outlined his own specific course through which NEP could be developed.

Kamenev, Stalin, and 'Socialism in one country'

For reasons that can only be explained by his desire to maintain unity, Kamenev's support of the 'troika' was critical to its continuance. Zinoviev, for example, was uneasy with Stalin's tightening grip over the party as Stalin had abused his power over the Georgian affair. The compromise solution that Kamenev had brokered in Tbilisi in March 1923 to allow opposition Georgian party members to retain their central committee seats in exchange for supporting Georgia merging into the Transcaucasus Republic was systematically undone when Stalin

violated the agreement by ejecting the dissenting members from the Georgian Central Committee. Stalin had also begun to make decisions without Politburo sanction, and he was intruding into the Comintern, which was Zinoviev's own preserve. Stalin had backed Radek to override Zinoviev, Bukharin, Klara Zetkin, H. Brandler, and the German CC in the controversy surrounding German fascism.[603] The alarming expansion of Stalin's political reach prompted Zinoviev on holiday in Kislovodsk in July and August of 1923 to discuss with Bukharin, G.E. Evdokimov, M.M. Lashevich, Frunze, Voroshilov, and Ordzhonikidze the possibility to reorganise the Secretariat so that Stalin would have to share in decision making.

There is nothing more telling to Kamenev's commitment to collective leadership than the fact that he sided with Stalin on the matter against his long-time friend Zinoviev. It is true that Kamenev felt that Zinoviev and Bukharin exaggerated Stalin's power,[604] but at the core of Kamenev's decision to back Stalin was his belief that a move to politicise the Secretariat would liquidate the Politburo and deprive the CC of its authority.[605] Finding common ground in the CC to keep the party united against a leftward swing was more important than checking Stalin's ambitions or in empowering a significantly narrower leading organ with command.

Kamenev was in fact worried about Stalin's growing authority and wanted to act. [606] He had shared his thoughts with Bukharin, who now angrily wrote to Kamenev that he had to be 'a bit more courageous' in expressing his views.[607] On 30 July Zinoviev pleaded to Kamenev that

[603] *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, no. 4, April, 1991 p. 198.
[604] Ibid., p. 201.
[605] RGASPI 323/2/85/2.
[606] RGASPI 323/2/26/11.
[607] *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, no. 4, April, 1991 p. 197.

he had 'no small influence' and that he was 'allowing Stalin to mock us.' In anguish Zinoviev continued that:

> 'In all the platforms they talk about a "troika", believing that in it I am not the least significant. In practice there is not any kind of troika, but a dictatorship of Stalin. Ilich was a thousand times right. Either there will be a serious way out, or a period of struggle is inevitable. Well, it is not new for you. You yourself have told me about it numerous times. What surprised me was that Voroshilov, Frunze and Sergo think almost the same thing. Write please, and tell me what you think…Your calmness is a wonderful thing, but not up to it being senseless. Really.'[608]

Kamenev was thus the reason the 'troika' remained unified against Trotsky. Zinoviev wanted to act and Kamenev rebuffed him, and it saved the power and influence of Stalin's Secretariat. When Stalin went to Kislovodsk in August, the two sides agreed to include Bukharin, Zinoviev, and Trotsky in the Orgburo, but their inclusion into the organisation on 25 September changed nothing. What the whole episode reveals is the sincerity of Kamenev's convictions against Trotsky's unfettered leftist policies. He assailed Trotsky due to his policies, not the man. If power had been all that was important, Kamenev would have taken the opportunity to support Bukharin and Zinoviev, but he had not.

Kamenev clearly underestimated Stalin and mistakenly thought him as simply a 'firing pin' of policy, incapable of establishing his own path.[609] Stalin was to Kamenev, 'just a small town politician'.[610] With this logic Kamenev turned a blind eye to Stalin's secretarial bullying as he felt Stalin's support of his position would hold party unity against Trotsky's leftist party unbalancing. In January 1924 at a party meeting in Moscow where Kamenev was chair, Sapronov

[608] Ibid., p. 198.
[609] RGASPI 323/2/50/50.
[610] Trotsky, *Stalin: An Appraisal of the Man and his Influence*, p. 393.

clearly demonstrated that secretarial 'recommendations' to regional and local party posts were becoming dictated appointments and that those appointed secretaries settled 'squabbles' by denying those in opposition the possibility to speak and would break up dissention by reassigning them outside their own Guberniia.[611] Earlier when Sapronov had directly confronted Kamenev about secretarial abuse in Tula on 6 December 1923, Kamenev had denied any knowledge of it.[612] He claimed he was more concerned with the tumultuous summer strikes than the 'independence of the Secretariat.'[613] Trotsky was pressing his attack on the leadership and if Kamenev moved against Stalin then the party left could take advantage. Kamenev decided that Trotsky was the greater of the two emerging dangers to the party.

In fact, Kamenev was so worried about the party destabilising in their dispute with Trotsky that at the 23-31 May 1924 XIII Party Conference, he again, together with Zinoviev saved Stalin's position. In Lenin's purported dictation 'Letter to the Congress' before his death, out of concern for Stalin's abuse of power the party leader had called for the removal of Stalin from his post as General Secretary. Kamenev and Zinoviev could have changed the history of the Soviet Union and pushed to remove him, but instead, out of fear of the party dividing they protected him.

The real turning point in their relations was when Stalin proclaimed that the Soviet Union could build 'socialism in one country'. It was true that Stalin said that the 'final victory' of socialism was not possible without international revolution, but Stalin's idea of 'final victory'

[611] RGASPI 323/2/40/18-23.
[612] Trotsky opposition forces had disrupted party work in Tula. The Politburo and the Moscow Committee dispatched Rykov to negotiate, but the very next day the Secretariat directed the opposition out of the city. See RGASPI 323/2/40/79.
[613] RGASPI 323/2/32/73.

was only necessary as a guarantee 'against intervention and... also against restoration…'.[614] The existence of complete socialism in one country was thus dependent only on international revolution to prevent a capitalist assault. The reason it opened a rift between Kamenev and Stalin was because this challenged the current NEP course which sought to accrue capital and import, rather than develop domestically, industrial equipment. Stalin failed to answer how the country could develop 'socialism in one country' when it was so dependent on international trade.

Historians, such as E.H. Carr and Stephen Kotkin, have misunderstood Kamenev as an initial supporter of 'socialism in one country'. Kamenev at the X Party Congress in early 1920 stated clearly that socialism in one country was impossible.[615] However, in 'Leninism or Trotskyism' Kamenev stated that Trotsky's theory of 'permanent revolution' defied Bolshevism because it rendered the country 'absolutely dependent upon the immediate revolution of the West', and here Carr and Kotkin contend that with such a statement Kamenev was endorsing 'socialism in one country'.[616] A close reading of the text reveals that Kamenev's point was to show how Trotsky and the Bolsheviks differed over the role of the peasantry. In Trotsky's view, the peasantry was revolutionary inert as they were inherently petty-bourgeois. From Kamenev's perspective, and mainstream Bolsheviks, they could be allies. Kamenev was therefore justifying NEP cooperation with the peasantry, not advocating socialism in isolation. He even alluded to War Communism by stating that if the party had accepted the theory of 'permanent revolution' and found itself without proletarian help from the West, in this scenario the peasantry would be an internal enemy and to build a proletarian state the Soviet Union would have to overcome 'the

[614] https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1924/foundations-leninism/ch03.htm
[615] *Protocoly X s"ezda RKP(b)*, p. 458-459.
[616] E.H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country: 1924-1926: Volume II*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1970, p. 59.

economic backwardness of the country by force, with the aid of military commands.'[617] Kamenev was pointing out that NEP disproved Trotsky's theory because the Soviet government was able to move *on the path* to socialism together with the peasantry beyond War Communism, despite the absence of international revolution. He made no claim that the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' was achievable solely in Russia.

Erik Van Ree is also in error in calling Kamenev's position as one advocating 'incomplete socialism' in one country, meaning that Kamenev saw 'socialism in one country' as a path for which to strive.[618] Van Ree argues that the party leaders had formed a consensus believing that by capturing the state apparatus, taking control of industry, and by ending the privatisation of land, they had in fact created a proletarian state. This was not Kamenev's position. To him the country was stuck in a 'dictatorship of the party'. The country had not yet even reached the beginning of socialism.

Therefore, the only way to understand Kamenev's difficulties with Stalin is by understanding the ideological reasons. There were numerous times Kamenev could have moved against the future dictator, but had avoided doing so because he felt Stalin was manageable as long as he was in ideological agreement. Kamenev's disdain for Stalin's 'socialism in one country' was sincere. In fact, the discussion over theoretical principle became so heated between Kamenev, Zinoviev, and Stalin that G.K. Orzhanikidze wrote to K.E. Voroshilov on 12 March that 'that both sides are prepared for mutual annihilation'.[619] Paul Gregory has shown that when Kamenev chaired Politburo meetings under the 'troika' leadership, meetings were rather

[617] Kamenev, 'Leninism or Trotskyism', p. 300.
[618] Erik Van Ree, 'Socialism in One Country: A Reassessment', *Studies in East European Thought,* 50.2, 1988, p. 104.
[619] Kvashonkin, *Bol'shevistskoe rukovodstvo perepiska 1912-1927,* p. 301.

'congenial'. Kamenev balanced debate, questioning, and oral presentations before everyone came to a decision.[620] When the 'troika' dissolved, with Kamenev as chair not much changed - 'peace reigned'.[621]

Stalin, however, would not have his theory challenged and resolved to shake the two loose. He therefore was *the first* to break ranks from the 'troika'. At a meeting discussing the results of the XIII Party Congress to party secretaries on 17 June 1924, Stalin slammed Zinoviev for his statement that within Soviet Russia existed a 'dictatorship of the party' over a 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. As noted in the previous chapter, this view originated from Kamenev. Zinoviev was simply repeating a concept Kamenev had formulated *more than a whole year* before any disagreements with Stalin had begun. It was not concocted to discredit Stalin. Stalin was therefore trying to distance himself from the extremely unpopular notion that the country was in fact *not* a proletarian state. Stalin, not Kamenev and Zinoviev, *deliberately* tried to make their disagreement public when in the press Stalin said that Kamenev had called Russia a country of 'Nepmen', rather than a 'NEP Russia', showing Kamenev's 'usual disregard for questions of theory'.[622] Stalin's baiting Kamenev was obvious, and Kamenev successfully parried his attack by writing to the editor of *Pravda* on 1 July, explaining that the quote about a country of 'Nepmen' had been a misprinted quote of Lenin, impossible to be Kamenev's opinion as they were meant to be Lenin's exact words.[623] Stalin broke from Kamenev and Zinoviev, not the other way round, and thus Robert McNeal is wrong to argue that Stalin had no idea his 'socialism in

[620] Paul R. Gregory, 'The Politburo's Role as Revealed by the Lost Transcripts', in *The Lost Politburo Transcripts*, eds., Paul R. Gregory and Norman Naimark, Yale University Press: New Haven, 2008, p. 26-27.
[621] Bazhanov, p. 140.
[622] RGASPI 323/2/67/5.
[623] RGASPI 323/2/67/14.

one country' would cause discord with Kamenev and Zinoviev.[624] Stalin knew precisely that by arguing for 'socialism in one country' he was challenging Kamenev and Zinoviev's understanding of NEP and the international worker's movement. Fearful of a prolonged peace among Western powers, Kotkin is right to contend that Stalin was developing a policy in accordance with the international situation,[625] but Stalin could have chosen to *continue* NEP's 'state capitalism' policy and simply 'waited' for revolution abroad to proceed to socialism on a secure industrial base. That was what Kamenev and Zinoviev were prepared to do, and that was the current NEP course until Stalin proffered his 'socialism in one country', promising near utopian feats in a country dependent on the world market.

Kamenev, Bukharin, and 'State Capitalism'

The improvement in both agriculture and industry throughout 1924 and early 1925 provoked an unchecked optimism for NEP in Bukharin. As opposed to Preobrazhensky who wanted to exploit the peasantry to fund industrialisation, Bukharin advocated expanding NEP by relaxing the administrative barriers which kept peasants and traders from accruing capital. The increased revenue of the peasantry, combined with the income from capitalist traders, the so-called NEPmen, would fuel the nation's industrial drive by hinging success on consumer consumption. Stephen Cohen has championed Bukharin's model as the evolutionary alternative to Stalin's later break-neck speed industrialisation and forced collectivisation campaigns as it

[624] McNeal, p. 96.
[625] Kotkin, chapter 12.

sought to develop both the economy and the social relations between the peasantry and the working class in equilibrium.[626]

Cohen's account completely ignores the fact that Kamenev and Sokol'nikov were already steering a centrist path of moderation on their 'state capitalism' model which developed the country through taxation and finance reforms. The economy was improving before Bukharin took command alongside Stalin. R.W. Davies has indicated that for 1924-1925, the nation's economic growth was outpacing the party's expectations.[627] By the end of 1925, workers' wages had nearly reached pre-war levels,[628] and industry and agriculture were collectively at 91% of pre-war levels.[629] The country had a positive trade balance, had successfully moved from a tax-in-kind to a monetary tax on the peasantry, and Sokol'nikov's currency reform had become so successful that the *chernovetz* traded internationally.[630] NEP did not need Bukharin's ideas to be successful.

Bukharin's growing influence owed much more to politics than to his economic ideas. There were two main reasons for Bukharin's ascendency over Kamenev. First, Kamenev's reputation had become irrevocably soiled over Zinoviev and his failed attempt to expel Trotsky from the Politburo in January 1925. The party blamed them for disrupting party unity,[631] and some, such as the students at Sverdlov University, even called for the two to be arrested.[632] Kamenev's entire history of conciliation was forgotten. Even though Stalin questioned many of Bukharin's views, when Kamenev and Zinoviev began to press him on his 'socialism in one

[626] Cohen, p. 248-249.
[627] R.W. Davies, Mark Harrison, S.G. Wheatcroft, *The Economic Transformation of the Soviet Union: 1913-1945*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 136.
[628] RGASPI 323/1/39/4.
[629] RGASPI 323/2/31/4.
[630] Paul R. Gregory, *Before Command: An Economic History of Russia from Emancipation to the First Five-Year Plan*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 89-90.
[631] *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, no. 8, 1991, p. 190.
[632] Ibid., p. 192.

country' the General Secretary truly acted as the 'firing pin' of Bukharin's policies and steered the party away from Kamenev and Sokol'nikov's economic views. Simultaneously, as the editor of *Pravda*, Bukharin trumpeted his own policies in the press. As Rykov and Tomskii were followers of Bukharin, the Politburo majority outnumbered Kamenev and Zinoviev 4 to 2, with Trotsky abstaining. Had Stalin not divorced himself from the 'troika', there would have been a 3 to 3 balance, with Trotsky a deciding vote. Needless to say, with Stalin backing Bukharin, the 25 April 1925 XIV Party Conference optimistically accepted Bukharin's policies. It was out of a power struggle and not failed economic policies that Bukharin came to prominence.

Why did Kamenev not embrace Bukharin's plan to expand NEP? The problem rested in what Kamenev considered Bukharin's oversimplification of the peasant question. Bukharin maintained that the middle peasantry dominated the village landscape and that the party need not overly concern itself with the poor peasant or rich kulak.[633] He even contended that the middle-peasant was not bourgeois.[634] Neglecting class differentiation invoked a fear in Kamenev that such a kulak-enabling policy would prove divisive and push the middle and poor peasantry away from the government.

Kamenev was certainly not wrong. Alan Ball has shown that the moment Bukharin's policies came into effect NEPmen were invigorated in Moscow by Bukharin's tax reducing policies and leniency.[635] Bukharin's policies meant an expansion of capitalist elements, plain and simple. Arguing that economic development needed to occur in equilibrium never sufficiently answered the question as to how increasing the wealth of well-to-do peasants and NEPmen was

[633] Cohen, p. 191.
[634] *XIV s"ezd vsesoyuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (bolshevikov): stenograficheskii otchet,* Moscow: Gosizdat, 1926, p. 267.
[635] Alan Ball, "Nep's Second Wind: 'The New Trade Practice'", *Soviet Studies,* 37.3, 1985, p. 37-38.

going to win the peasantry over to socialism. It was a divisive policy. Bukharin's choice to ignore the goods famine as endemic to the Soviet system meant he was unconcerned with the fact that consumer consumption far outstripped industrial capacity. Raising peasant income was only going to exacerbate difficulties. His left critics were rightly worried that their vision for a planned economy would slip away.

What is absolutely crucial to understand was that Bukharin sought to overcome these contradictions by asserting that they were living under the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. In this view the state could afford peasants and NEPmen to grow because in the future the same state would 'turn the rudder' and direct the capitalist gains down a socialist path.[636] As Kamenev considered the country to be under the 'dictatorship of the party' and not the proletariat, he feared that the *means* Bukharin was employing would never lead to socialist ends. Once down a capitalist path with little restraint, the non-proletarian ship of state would set a course to the restoration of capitalism. Kamenev was so committed to finding a way to peacefully co-opt the 'petty-bourgeois' peasantry by showing the superiority of socialist enterprises that he devised a new programme.[637]

The left opposition had fought Kamenev at a time of economic hardship during the 'scissor's crisis' and after a devastating famine. It says a lot that in a time of growth Bukharin's platform provoked the party left far more than Kamenev's policies ever did. This was in part due to Bukharin's comments in April's *Bolshevik* where he urged peasants, 'enrich yourselves,

[636] Lars T. Lih, 'Political Testament of Lenin and Bukharin and the meaning of NEP', *Slavic Review*, 50.2, 1991, p. 249.
[637] RGASPI 323/2/71/33.

develop your land'.[638] This threw caution to the wind with a lopsided policy favourable to the peasantry and the NEPmen at the expense of the proletariat. Kamenev's fiscal policy to tax NEPmen and kulaks at high rates to fund the state was being undone, and a flourishing of private traders jarred working class sensibilities.

Bukharin also shocked the left by revising Communist agrarian principles. He proclaimed that cooperatives, not collective farming, would develop socialism.[639] This flew in the face of pre-revolution Bolshevik policy that the state would gradually consolidate cooperatives into collective farms.[640] An article in *Zarya Vostok* 16 July illustrated leftist frustration when the author complained that the party was 'obsessed with "practical" matters' to the detriment of 'revolutionary idealism'.[641] At the 23-25 July CC plenum of the Communist Party of Ukraine, G.I. Petrovskii warned that the communist organizations in the countryside were too 'weak' to cope with 'these NEP tendencies'.

Kamenev's centrist NEP was vastly different than Bukharin's rightist NEP due to their interpretation of Lenin and what 'state capitalism' actually meant. Kamenev relied on the Lenin of 1918 and 1921, whereas Bukharin found support from Lenin's 1923 article 'On cooperatives'. In 1918 Lenin had written that 'state-capitalism' was a transitional stage to socialism,[642] and in 1921 at the introduction of NEP he iterated that the state had formed '...a bloc, a union of the Soviet, i.e., proletarian, state power with state capitalism against the small-proprietor (patriarchal

[638] RGASPI 323/2/97/12.
[639] Cohen, p. 194.
[640] RGASPI 323/2/50/66.
[641] RGASPI 323/2/71/48.
[642] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 36, p. 301.

and petty-bourgeois) element.'[643] This provided Kamenev with the framework that by heavily taxing the prosperous of society they would gradually root out the petty-bourgeoisie, NEPmen, and kulaks on a policy dictated by finance. However, in Lenin's mind these elements would not simply disappear. Lenin argued that state power and 'state capitalism' would channel them through cooperatives to transform their small individual enterprises into larger associations capable of increased production. Once large enough, the state would take over.

Bukharin railed against this interpretation. He maintained in an issue of *Bolshevik* that in 1921 Lenin had called for concessions via 'state capitalism' to form a bloc with capitalists in order to overcome the petty-bourgeoisie. Then in 'on cooperatives' in 1923 Bukharin insisted that Lenin shifted his position in support of a union with the peasantry through cooperatives to remove the remnants of private capital in general, both small and large.[644] 'State capitalism' in this scenario was simply a maneuver, a phrase for concession policy, and that in 1923 Lenin was calling for an alliance with the peasantry different from 1921.

Bukharin was mistaken. In both of Lenin's 1921 and 1923 articles he advocated an alliance with the peasantry, with his latter article complementing the former. Lenin was not advocating a change in NEP, he was reiterating his position on advancing the cooperatives as a means to change peasant attitudes and 'culture'. Lenin declared that a 'practical goal' of NEP was concessions, but he was speaking about the introduction of NEP as a 'pure type' of 'state capitalism'. Later he argued that a new 'state capitalism' of a more socialist type would raise the cultural level of the peasantry. How it would function was unclear, but this indicates that Lenin

[643] Lenin, *PSS,* vol. 43, p. 223.
[644] RGASPI 323/2/71/32.

saw ‘state capitalism’ as a means of progressing towards socialism and not simply a manoeuvre, and this confutes Bukharin’s views on Lenin’s final words. There was nothing in Lenin’s article calling for a new course.[645]

Again, Kamenev’s position derived from his understanding of the state. By the XIV Party Congress the so-called ‘platform of the four’, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Krupskaya, and Sokol’nikov challenged Bukharin on his revision of Lenin’s ideas. One of their main points was that ‘state capitalism’ was in fact capitalistic and *not* socialist. At an STO meeting on 7 July 1925 Sokol’nikov explained that the nationalization of industry had been done to increase the funds of the state treasury, nothing more.[646] Not even state ownership of industry was considered a socialist directive to the four and this provoked the Bukharin group. Similar to Lenin, Bukharin simply wrote off exploitive capitalist wage relations that the state employed. Bukharin thought, rather simplistically, that ‘there cannot be capitalism without capitalists’.[647]

When Bukharin declared that the Soviet Union had ‘socialist state industry’ and was not ‘state capitalist’, it conveyed how much Bukharin and the leadership had departed from Marx. The four accurately responded to Bukharin that if it was socialist then it was ‘a disservice to the cause of genuine socialist construction.’[648] To a reproachful audience at the XIV Party Congress Sokol’nikov and Kamenev persisted in illuminating the leadership’s flagrant ideological error by stating that the only thing socialist about industry in theory was that it was owned by the state. The proletariat ‘works for socialism,’ Kamenev said, but to the idea that the party should tell them they were working in ‘socialist conditions’ and that factories were ‘socialist in the complete

[645] Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 45, p. 374.
[646] Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF) P5674/1a/53/126.
[647] RGASPI 323/2/46/5.
[648] RGASPI 323/2/71/41.

sense of the word, it will not be the truth, but an embellishment of the truth.'[649] Nevertheless, due to Kamenev's remarkable 'Bolshevik Centrism', he searched for compromise, proposing the congress not call their stage of development 'state-capitalist' or 'socialist', but a 'transition' period.[650] The congress was deaf to his proposal because there were few who wanted to be told that they were still laying socialism's foundation. Further, if the congress had accepted the four's definition of 'state capitalism', the party would have had to backpedal on Bukharin's policies of deepening NEP.

Instead, the party pushed forward with Bukharin's revisionist ideas away from a 'dictatorship of finance' to expanding NEP in the countryside. By understanding Bukharin's view of the state it is possible to understand why he thought his course would maintain social and economic equilibrium and that in the future they could 'turn the rudder', but Kamenev was right, they did not have a proletarian state by Marxist or Lassallean definition. Bukharin's misguided policies were tipping the balance of social relations in favour of the peasantry and towards capitalism.

'Slow Down Comrades!' – Kamenev and the Left

Before the centrist policy Kamenev advocated is examined in detail, the charge made by Robert V. Daniels,[651] Catherine Merridale,[652] and others that Kamenev and the four were adopting a leftist line must be challenged. Firstly, the four's defence of an economic model which had the purpose of accumulating wealth for the state in a system they themselves believed was

[649] *XIV s"ezd vsesoyuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (bolshevikov): stenograficheskii otchet,* p. 258.
[650] Ibid., p. 270-271.
[651] Daniels, p. 253.
[652] Merridale, *Moscow Politics and the Rise of Stalin,* p. 31.

capitalistic in no way accommodated the left's desire for economic planning, rapid industrialization, or a focus on the working class at the peasant's expense. Furthermore, Sokol'nikov, whose ideas on which the 'platform of the four' was founded, advocated investment in agriculture to spur industrial development, not the other way round.[653] Zinoviev parroted Sokol'nikov, advocating that the proceeds from agriculture and agricultural exports should be used to import more advanced industrial equipment. The Soviet Union was too industrially backwards to rely on its own industry.[654]

However, to evaluate directly the charge of Kamenev's leftism, it is best to examine his actions in what was his primary occupation, economic forecasting in STO. In STO in December 1923, a time all historians are agreed that Kamenev was certainly not considered to be advocating a leftist line, Kamenev complained that trusts were indiscriminately and recklessly seeking to plan on the greatest means for the best possible results, a typical leftist maximalist approach. Kamenev fought against this 'monopoly psychology'.[655] For example, when a representative from Baku approached Sovnarkom for a 70 million ruble loan, Kamenev refused him because the Baku official had promised to boost oil production six-fold, a total impossibility.[656] As will be shown, Kamenev never strayed from resisting this leftist impulse and advocated industrialization at a moderate pace.

A superficial reading of events within STO might suggest that Kamenev backed highly unrealistic industrial targets. With an excellent grain harvest in 1925 it was assumed that the year

[653] R.W. Davies, *Soviet economic development from Lenin to Khrushchev*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 32-33.
[654] William Korey, 'Zinoviev's Critique of Stalin's Theory of Socialism in One Country', *American Slavic and East European Review*, 9.4, 1950, p. 257-258.
[655] RGASPI 323/2/30/77.
[656] RGASPI 323/2/122/117.

would yield very profitable exports for much needed industrial imports, and Gosplan (which was under STO authority) optimistically forecasted a potential procurement of 780 million puds in order to project higher industrial targets.[657] However, by October government grain procurement had reached only 80-85% of its goal. The state had initially paid for grain at a higher rate than its world market value and when financially overextended procurement agencies reduced prices the peasants refused to sell.[658] The hope to export 380 million puds was now impossible and industrial investment would have to be curtailed. Kamenev was not to blame for the high grain targets in June and July because he had been on holiday.[659]

At the 10 October CC meeting and in the Politburo on 26 October Pyatikov (a staunch leftist) and Rykov proclaimed the situation a 'crisis'. Kamenev tried to reassure his peers that there was no need to panic and that industrial development would simply need to 'slow down'. Of course this phrase did nothing to temper Dzerzhinsky who adamantly endorsed greater industrial production as the head of the Supreme Council of the National Economy, Vesenkha. Understanding economics far better, Kamenev tried to explain that 'the peasantry is withholding grain and forcing us not to go forward as quickly as we had planned, but we are going forward, not backward, and *we won't stand still*, and as such there is no crisis.'[660] Kamenev backed Sokol'nikov in making extensive financial cuts to the loan swamped industrial sector in order to

[657] RGASPI 17/2/197/62-63.
[658] The government had still procured 70% more grain than the previous year and industry had risen to 80% of the pre-war level, but it still fell short of their projected goals.
[659] *XIV s"ezd vsesoyuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (bolshevikov): stenograficheskii otchet*, p. 266. See also RGASPI 323/2/138/74. At the 6 April CC meeting he indicated that he returned to STO only on the 5 August, 1925 after a two month absence.
[660] *Stenogrammy zasedanii Politburo TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b) 1923-1938 gg*, vol. 1, p. 347.

keep inflation in check.[661] They correctly saw that an escalation of loans and inflation would damper industrial output, but Dzerzhinsky was so riled he called Sokol'nikov's financial proposals 'anti-soviet'.[662] Kamenev agreed with Dzerzhinsky on the principle that investment in industry and increased industrial production were essential for building socialism, but added: 'How can we conduct the kind of policy Witte discussed: we ourselves cannot eat, but we export?'[663] Maintaining peasant trust to the state was critical, and Kamenev concluded that if the peasantry 'does not want to go in the straight line that we prescribed and zigzags, then we will also zigzag and manoeuvre correctly.'[664] Kamenev remained a Sokol'nikov supporter, believing that investment in agriculture would provide greater dividends than funnelling money into industrialization for economic growth. He was therefore not supporting leftist maximalist causes.

The 'platform of the four' was not directed at opportunistically adopting leftist programmes solely for political advantage. This is confirmed by the way in which the four organised their opposition. The resolution adopted by the XII Leningrad Party Conference, under the influence of Zinoviev, specifically stated that there was no possible alliance with either Trotsky or the Workers' Opposition. If the Workers' Opposition wanted to challenge the leadership they would have to abandon their platform and unite with the Leningraders.[665] This did not occur because the 'platform of the four' contained no pure leftist policies. The four's position was that it was a middle road and they certainly encouraged left support, but seeing 'state capitalism' as the platform's model, it failed to bring the Workers' Opposition to their

[661] David M. Woodruff, 'The Politburo on Gold, Industrialization, and the International Economy, 1925-1926', in *The Lost Politburo Transcripts*, eds., Paul R. Gregory and Norman Naimark, Yale University Press: New Haven, 2008, p. 213.
[662] GARF P5674/1a/53/126.
[663] *Stenogrammy zasedanii Politburo TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b) 1923-1938 gg*, vol. 1, p. 387.
[664] RGASPI 17/2/197/75.
[665] RGASPI 323/2/73/59.

banner. The only thing truly leftist about their platform was their warning of NEP excesses, and this of course won over some workers, but this opened them up for unwarranted charges of leftism and pseudo-Trotskyism from their opponents without the benefit of leftist aid.

A Lassallean Centrist NEP Alternative

Searching for the middle path, Kamenev tried to unite the party left and right with a Lassallean inspired idea to both reduce the influence of the peasantry in the party and curtail left party idealism, and if successful, the result of his proposal would tackle that long-enduring problem Russia faced in failing to organically connect state government with its apprehensive populace. In the existing record Kamenev did not explicitly cite Lassalle, but that does not rule him out as the source of his inspiration. Indeed, as will be shown, his plan bore a striking similarity to Lassalle's 1862 proposal of developing working class culture through 'individual association'. At the XIV Party Congress, Krupskaya specifically mentioned Lassalle in explaining the 'platform of the four's' desire to raise working class culture.[666] It is also important to note that Kamenev did not need to openly refer to Lassalle, as the audience to whom he was speaking understood the connection. Bukharin, for example, was not at a loss later in 1926 to explicitly invoke Lassalle's name to attack Kamenev's views despite Kamenev not having made a specific reference to the founder of Social-Democracy.[667]

Kamenev believed that the party's aim should be to implement policy that would lead the peasantry to view the government as their own. From the beginning of 1924 to the end of 1925,

[666] *XIV s"ezd vsesoyuznoi komunisticheskoi partii (b)*, p. 164.
[667] RGASPI 17/2/246V2/39-40

700,000 new workers entered Soviet industry from the countryside.[668] With their continued penetration into the working class Kamenev proposed on 4 September 1925 in the Moscow Committee that the one way to bring the peasantry into the fold was through profit sharing. He maintained that peasant-cum-workers saw themselves as no more than 'hired labour', disconnected from the state. As workers' wages were nearing pre-war levels, Kamenev seized the initiative to try and change wage relations and advance proletarian culture.

Unlike his factory provisions policy of 1921 which focused only on collective gains, Kamenev proposed that the new workers' psychology required that profits from factories be doled out not only on a collective basis, but on an individual one.[669] He elaborated that if a factory yielded a profitable return of 1,000 rubles, 500-700 rubles would go to the worker, and the remainder would be kept collectively by the factory to improve working conditions and develop housing. Thus the workers would bond collectively while simultaneously forging individual loyalty to the state.[670]

At first glance his plan appears a compromise with capitalist individualism, but in fact it was quite the opposite as the inspiration for his idea emanated from the socialist path espoused by Lassalle in 1862, who at that time maintained that 'individual association' was the key to uniting a working class mired in local collective association. Lassalle contended that organising workers by factory served to only marginally benefit small industry worker societies with no all-encompassing class gains.[671] In similar fashion and at length as head of STO and against the left, Kamenev had struggled with industries operating for their own profits at the expense of the

[668] RGASPI 17/2/197/67.
[669] RGASPI 323/2/46/2.
[670] RGASPI 17/2/197/67.
[671] Lassalle, *Lassalle's Open Letter to the National Association of Germany*, p. 25-29.

collective. Profit sharing on an individual level would not only forge a relationship between the state and the petty-bourgeois peasant, it would erode the spirit of left-wing syndicalism by making it so that workers would believe that they were 'not only a member of the party' or 'a citizen, but would feel that they were an element of production', part of a global whole.[672] Associations based at the factory level would diminish in exchange for a working class culture where by means of individual gains solidarity between workers from all sectors of the economy would emerge tempered through a patron state, making the state itself the vehicle for working class unity, not workers' groups themselves. As Lassalle had hoped in 1860s Germany to defeat the ideas of Schultze Delitzsch, and no doubt as Kamenev had hoped to overcome the left, profit sharing on an individual level had the potential to change the psychology of left-minded workers to such a degree that they would *voluntarily* labour in common interest through a state benefactor.

Lassalle argued that under capitalism workers understood that they were linked globally in production, but were unable to grasp that if they were part of the same tree of production they should reap its rewards equally.[673] Kamenev's profit sharing scheme was to finally resolve what Lassalle believed essential, to raise the psychology of the proletariat to end chaos in distribution. With workers tied to the state through positive incentives the Communist worry of being an isolated proletarian government surrounded by a sea of petty-bourgeois peasants would gradually recede as Kamenev's policy would merge both worker left and peasant right. Unlike Bukharin's policy which ignored class differentiation in favour of unfettered peasant consumerism to fuel industrialisation, in the footsteps of Lassalle Kamenev saw the state as the necessary vehicle for

[672] RGASPI 323/2/31/72.
[673] Alexander Gray, *The Socialist Tradition: Moses to Lenin*, London: Longmans, Green and Co Ltd, 1963, p. 337.

social transformation and socialist development. This reasoning explains Kamenev's aversion to worker control and anarcho-syndicalist tendencies because those ideas disrupt national community. The state was to serve as a great equalizer through 'solidarity'.[674]

The assertion that Kamenev in 1924-1925 was moving to the party left is simply untrue. Trotsky and Preobrazhensky's 'primitive socialist accumulation' had nothing in common with his position. Kamenev was neither advocating radically increased industrialisation or to exploit the peasantry as a colony to fund industrial development. Peasants could be co-opted into supporting the state and through taxation on the most affluent in society the state could gradually accumulate capital. It was definitely not a leftist platform. It was a centrist policy, an extension of the NEP he and Sokol'nikov had championed prior to 1925. However, his idea meant that both Bukharin's group and the left had to compromise, but neither side budged. On 6 November Stalin led the CC and Politburo to ultimately reject the proposal.[675]

The idea that individual profit sharing could further a socialist psychology was lost on Kamenev's peers due to their notion that the Soviet Union was in fact an already established proletarian state. For example, N.A. Uglanov and L.M. Kaganovich could not see past the fact that there would be some degree of inequality between workers.[676] The two completely missed the point that Kamenev's objective was to first connect the worker to the state with the purpose of settling inequality later. V.I. Polonskii argued that the policy would have split the working class because state controlled industries had no profits to share with the workers they

[674] Lassalle, *The Working Man's Programme*, p. 44.
[675] RGASPI 323/2/46/3 and 323/2/97/85.
[676] *XIV s''ezd vsesoyuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (bolshevikov): stenograficheskii otchet*, p. 196 and p. 235.

employed.[677] Polonskii had no problem funneling industrial proceeds into state coffers because despite employing capitalist wage relations, funding the 'proletarian' state was not exploiting the working class. Molotov stated quite plainly that the government could not bring workers closer because they were already building socialism together in unison.[678] With Kamenev's minority view that the state was a 'dictatorship of the party', he was the only one among the leadership searching for a way to bridge the divide between the state and workers and to unite the party left and right with a programme to both economically improve the lot of workers and peasants.

Thus Kamenev was not aligned with Stalin on 'socialism in one country', with Bukharin's NEP reforms, or with the party left. His centrist policy maintained its internationalist commitment and favoured moderate industrial growth by means of economically and culturally uplifting the peasantry and the working class through new wage relations. Yet, inheriting Lenin's monologism, the maximalist left and the revisionist right rejected the compromise and led the party and state into a 'crisis of centrism'.

Kamenev and STO against Stalin

There were three main obstacles to Kamenev overcoming his opponents. The first was his credibility. His near pristine reputation for toleration had become irrevocably soiled over Zinoviev and his failed attempt to expel Trotsky from the Politburo in January 1925. By the end of February both the CC and CCC of the Ukrainian Communist Party had written a letter to the CC blaming Kamenev and Zinoviev for disrupting party unity.[679] The second reason was that of

[677] Ibid., p. 170.
[678] Ibid., p. 480.
[679] Some students at Sverdlov University even called for the two to be arrested. See *Izvestiya TsK KPSS,* no. 8, 1991, p. 190.

the 400,000 party members in early 1924, a staggering 80% had entered after the February revolution.[680] The rank and file had little to no knowledge of Kamenev's pre-revolutionary primacy in the party, and thanks to Trotsky, what they did know was that he had opposed the October Revolution.[681] The last, but certainly not the least obstructive to his ability to lead was Stalin's Secretariat which controlled party personnel, cell discussion, and was predominantly loyal to its General Secretary. Once Stalin had successfully replaced Kamenev's most trusted and influential secretary, I.A. Zelenskii, with the Bukharin loyal N.A. Uglanov, Kamenev's relaxed hold over the MPO fell like dominoes to his dictatorial presence.[682]

Unlike Zinoviev, Stalin, and Bukharin, Kamenev had very little means at his disposal. Kamenev's influence in the MPO had been waning for some time as he was preoccupied with the running of STO, Sovnarkom, and chairing the Politburo. He was not a micro manager and did not hold tight control over his organisations as Stalin and Zinoviev did. He was more democratic, and although he had a small following and supporters from those from within MPO as well as from without, such as G. Ya. Belen'kii, Ryazanov, Zelenskii, and Yu.V. Lomonosov,[683] none of them were schemers, vindictive, or uncompromising, and in the case of Ryazanov and Lomonosov, the

[680] RGASPI 323/2/66/45.
[681] As his power and influence began to ebb his family became a target of harsh ridicule. His son Alexander, nicknamed 'Lyutik', was criticized as a degenerate part of an emerging bourgeois culture for riding motorcycles and hobnobbing with Moscow's cultural elite. Later to marry the film actress Galina Kravchenko of *Aelita Queen of Mars* fame in 1929, Alexander had such an image that a Moscow theatre performed a satirical play entitled *The Son of a People's Commissar*, mocking his behaviour. Stalin urged its continuation. Kamenev's wife, Olga, also fell suspect to criticism. Being involved with famous actors and actresses as the chair of the Political Soviet of the Theatre of the Revolution, rumour circulated that she led a rather promiscuous lifestyle, dallying with Moscow's biggest stars. A vicious slander spread that Alexander was not Kamenev's son, but a bastard born of her infidelity. See Bazhanov, p. 126-127 and Fokke, p. 63.
[682] Daniels, p. 254.
[683] Heywood, p. 169.

two had fallen out with the party leadership after years of disagreement.[684] There were also those who favoured Kamenev's position, but were unwilling to support his platform. The head of the Commissariat of Agriculture (NKZem) V.M. Smirnov, Gosplan's head Tsyurupa, and head of the Commissariat of Foreign Trade Krasin all had similar views on the economic course proffered by Sokol'nikov, but past disputes with Kamenev left them silent in the controversy.[685] Dzerzhinsky, who had long worked with Kamenev in STO, was initially sympathetic as well, but more an ideologue industrialiser than an economist, he quickly deserted Kamenev over his 'slow down' policy and subsequently remained one of Kamenev's most vehement critics until his sudden death in 1926.

Thus, what remained at Kamenev's disposal was his STO post and his long-time ally and friend, Zinoviev, whose stern and tight control brought with him the Leningrad Party Organisation and Leningrad workers to their cause. The two had been able to influence Krupskaya, who personally disdained Bukharin's policies and was eager to preserve party unity. She was convinced Kamenev and Zinoviev's path was the middle course. Together they joined Sokol'nikov, whose practical economic ideas were the basis for Kamenev's theoretical orientation.

Kamenev and Sokol'nikov tried to warn the Stalin-Bukharin majority of Bukharin's divisive policies by challenging the majority where they were weakest, in economics. Using the 28 July statistics provided by the Central Statistical Administration (TsSU) headed by P.I. Popov

[684] For example, Ryazanov had criticized the leadership over the trial of the SRs, and Lomonosov had disagreed over foreign trade relations.
[685] Whereas Smirnov had been part of the Democratic Centralists and therefore had been in opposition to Kamenev the previous year, Krasin and Kamenev's great dislike for one another dated back to pre-revolutionary days when Kamenev had been instrumental in expelling the so-called 'god-builders' from the Bolshevik faction.

in his 28 August *Pravda* article 'Our Achievements, Difficulties, and Prospects', Kamenev illustrated that 4% of peasant households produced 30% of the USSR's grain with 14% holding 61% of it.[686] At the CC meeting 8 October he emphasized that those same households purchased 19.3% of the country's industrial goods.[687] Thus, even though the middle and poor peasant were still consuming the bulk of industrial production, the top 4% had increased consumption by 140% from the previous year. The middle and poor peasant had increased their consumption by 50% and 20% respectively. What Kamenev and Sokol'nikov economically spelled out was that an expansion of NEP into the village was a disastrous kulak enabling policy, bound to instigate class conflict. According to Kamenev and Sokol'nikov's predictions, 40% of the peasant population would have to buy grain the coming year.

The demise of Kamenev's position came not from his views being defeated in party debate as Trotsky's had been within the MPO, but from Stalin's shrewdly crafted subterfuge. At first Stalin denied Kamenev a role in determining the Politburo's agenda, but that was not enough because as head of STO Kamenev dominated Politburo discussions.[688] Then, as R.W. Davies has shown, together with Rykov Stalin soon after backed data manipulated by Rabkrin to refute Popov's findings.[689] This had been relatively easy for them to accomplish as Kuibyshev, a Stalin loyalist, was head of Rabkrin-CCC. It was also a surprising move because Rabkrin was now acting as a statistical bureau and an economic organ rather than its original design to act as an oversight committee. The underhanded attack on Kamenev continued, as *Pravda* under Bukharin's leadership denounced Popov and the TsSU and denied him any rebuttal, something

[686] RGASPI 323/2/97/59.
[687] RGASPI 17/2/197/66.
[688] Bazhanov, p. 140.
[689] R.W. Davies, 'Grain, Class, and Politics', in *The Lost Politburo Transcripts,* eds., Paul R. Gregory and Norman Naimark, Yale University Press: New Haven, 2008, p. 196-197.

Trotsky had been allowed.[690] Stalin then attacked TsSU for its lack of 'objectivity' in collecting data, an absolutely absurd position. As Davies points out, denying statistical agencies the right to draw social conclusions showed Stalin's feebleness in understanding the purpose and complexity of statistical gathering.[691] With Rykov and Kuibyshev backing Stalin from Sovnarkom and Rabkrin, the Politburo removed Popov from his post. Only Kamenev voted to save him.

Here again the uncompromising Stalin appeared. As Stalin had dealt with Trotsky by limiting his authority exclusively to the Politburo where he would perpetually be outnumbered, he wanted Kamenev's rival authority ended permanently. In routine measure on 28 October STO decreed that NKVTorg, the Commissariat of Foreign Trade (NKVneshtorg), and the TsSU recalculate the size of the overall grain harvest and its cash crops and use those figures to draw up new plans for the grain collection campaign and grain export. When Kamenev appeared at the 2 November Politburo meeting with figures, he was surprisingly charged by the General Secretary, the chair of Sovnarkom, and the head of the CCC with overstepping STO's authority. Stalin, Rykov, and Kuibyshev maintained that with the Politburo soon set to discuss the 'import-export-currency' plans, STO had pre-empted Politburo directives and placed it in 'a silly position'.[692] This, however, had hitherto been common practice. Kamenev planned STO meetings months in advance to ensure the attendance of representatives from the localities and its meetings had never before needed Politburo approval to proceed. Furthermore, members of the CC attended STO meetings and so did commissariat representatives, providing ample opportunity for input. To overcome Kamenev, Stalin fundamentally changed the function of state and party when he

[690] RGASPI 323/2/48/2.
[691] Davies, 'Grain, Class, and Politics', p. 196.
[692] *Stenogrammy zasedanii Politburo TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b) 1923-1938 gg*, vol. 1, p. 370.

insisted the Politburo must act 'not parallel with STO, but through STO'. *This was a complete reversal of protocol*. When Rykov motioned to void the secret decree, Kamenev offered his resignation.[693]

Kamenev saw all too clearly what was happening. Kuibyshev on 15 October proposed a Politburo commission together with Rykov, Kamenev, Sokol'nikov, and Stalin to eliminate STO altogether and pass its responsibilities to Sovnarkom. This would have enabled Rykov to direct the economy instead of Kamenev. Though Stalin denied Kamenev's accusation that he and Kuibyshev were working in tandem to deliberately undermine him as 'funny', there was most certainly intriguing afoot. Kamenev declared:

> 'It's absolutely a political step and my reaction can only be one way. I must request that the chair of STO be purged… It will not shake the central foundation of the republic… Comrade Lenin placed me at this post, and if you want to play a petty game around it, do it, only without me.'[694]

Kamenev was right; nearly two months later Ya. E. Rudzutak admitted the maneuver, explaining that 'several members' of the Politburo had demanded a special conference to consider economic questions in an effort to force direct Politburo participation in economic decisions.[695] The 'special conference' had enabled Stalin and Kuibyshev to enter STO and begin to outvote Kamenev. Although Tomskii prevented the Politburo from accepting Kamenev's resignation and Dzerzhinsky questioned the move to tarnish STO, the vote to change STO's decision from a decree to a preliminary report for Politburo consideration was accepted 3 to 2. Bukharin and

[693] Ibid., p. 372.
[694] Ibid., p. 376.
[695] *XIV s''ezd vsesoyuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (bolshevikov): stenograficheskii otchet*, p. 340.

Rykov had sided with Stalin against Zinoviev's proposal, which had excluded any mention of it being preliminary.

Stalin, Rykov, Bukharin, and Kuibyshev thus ensured STO's dependence on the leading party organ, forever changing the working dynamic of the Soviet system by aggrandizing the Politburo's power. Not only was Kamenev's leading role in the economy at an end and his sphere of influence gone, but his attempted assault upon Stalin had ended with the Politburo now having the power to arbitrarily control the *day-to-day* operations of state institutions, something under Lenin's leadership had been outside Politburo purview. Lenin's intention for Kamenev to direct the state and Stalin the party had not been simply semantic, but Kamenev's drive to have the party act as an oversight committee for economic organs had resulted in his own political demise by empowering Stalin's party machine. Although he could not have possibly envisioned that a Stalin controlled Rabkrin-CCC would doctor statistics to challenge his authority, he had been terribly naïve to think that Rabkrin would have remained above party infighting.

Even with Stalin's scheming and Kamenev's misguided efforts to embed the CCC into the state apparatus, Kamenev was not adequately prepared to challenge Stalin. STO had been Kamenev's political weapon against Stalin and Bukharin, but he had wielded it not as a leading director, but as an arbitrator. No doubt a reflection of Kamenev's managerial leadership style, welcoming compromise and collective decision making, STO was often too bogged down with inter-commissariat disputes to provide effective leadership. Kamenev did not typically drive policy, but instead heard arguments, sought common ground, and then made a decision. A testament to his desire for collective leadership, on 8 February 1924 Dzerzhinsky had complained that STO was acting as a 'parliament', and proposed that STO bypass commissariats to talk with

factory managers directly,[696] but that was not how Kamenev ran STO. Under Lenin's management STO had run with firm control and its authority had eclipsed the Politburo in economic matters.[697] With Kamenev STO's effectiveness in uniform decision making deteriorated in the face of collegial management.

Zinoviev was more cunning and better equipped, and he was the only reason there remained any hope of success. Yet at the same time he was the platform's greatest hindrance. It was no secret that Zinoviev had great ambitions for leadership. In fact, due to Zinoviev's reputation, Dzerzhinsky was able to blame Kamenev and Zinoviev for needlessly endangering the party in pursuit of power, and in a CC meeting leading up to the congress he called them '*Kronstadty*'.[698] Yet without Zinoviev, the platform's numbers at the congress would have been far more dismal than the paltry sum they had with the Leningrad delegation.

The XIV Party Congress and the 'Crisis of Centrism'

Stalin and Bukharin led a fight against the 'platform of the four' which was new to how factions had treated each other in the past. Trotsky, for example, had been able to print his views in *Pravda* and Kamenev's MPO had tolerated debate irrespective of the X Party Congress ban on factions. Now, however, no debate was allowed. Stalin repressed all those opposed to him. Kamenev had been so displeased with how Stalin sacked a secretary opposition supporter, S.S. Zakharov, that he questioned Uglanov, 'who would open their mouths after what happened? It is an atmosphere of decay. I cannot support it.'[699] When the 'platform' of the four had first

[696] GARF P5674/1a/53/8.
[697] Rigby, *Lenin's Government: Sovnarkom 1917-1922,* p. x.
[698] Chuev and Resis, p. 143.
[699] RGASPI 323/2/27/91

presented their views in a secret report on 19 September to the CC summarizing the year's disagreements in a platform, the first act of Bukharin, Kuibyshev, Rudzudtak, Dzerzhinsky, Molotov, Stalin, Kalinin, Rykov, and Tomskii in the CC was to condemn it. The CC majority criticized Zinoviev's book *Philosophy of an Epoch* as an attack on the leadership for its allusions to future failures, labeling it the central foundation for the new 'faction'. The evidence against Kamenev was thin, but nevertheless they accused him of factionalism because he had delivered an economic report to the Moscow Committee on 4 September which had not fully endorsed their policy.[700] Things escalated when on 4 October Kamenev, Zinoviev, Sokol'nikov and Krupskaya wrote a rebuttal entitled, 'Our Answer to the Ten', in which they refused to restrict their criticism. The 'ten' then assailed them with similar words the party had used to discredit the Mensheviks. Yet they were not former Mensheviks as Trotsky had been, but old Bolsheviks. Such an attack had not been party norm. At the XIV Moscow Guberniia Party Conference 8 December the 'ten' charged the opposition with 'defeatism', 'Akselrodism', 'pessimism', 'liquidationism', and that they were in a 'panic before the kulak'. With Leningrad as his domain and no other avenue open, Zinoviev used *Leningradskaya Pravda* to challenge Stalin and Bukharin's majority.

For a brief moment it appeared that an open conflict at the next party congress might be avoided. In compromising fashion to both Stalin and Bukharin, Kamenev began emphasizing that they 'were building socialism'.[701] Even in Leningrad where the 'Leningrad Opposition' had their greatest numerical strength, the phrase 'state capitalism' was struck from their platform.[702]

[700] RGASPI 323/2/97/65.
[701] RGASPI 323/2/46/4.
[702] RGASPI 323/2/73/22.

Sensing possible rapprochement, Kalinin, Stalin, Bukharin, Rykov, Rudzutak, Tomskii, Molotov, and Dzerzhinsky appealed to the Leningrad organization on 15 December. They asked the opposition not to challenge any member of the Politburo aside from Trotsky, and in exchange they were prepared to accept the inclusion of some Leningraders into the Secretariat, allow one to join *Pravda's* editorial staff, and would 'soften' the Moscow conference's scathing attack on the 'platform of the four'.[703] However, a deal could not be reached. There was nothing in the overture that showed any degree of ideological compromise concerning the peasantry, or any possibility for the traditional open party debate before a congress to return.[704] The opposition had taken a step forward, but Stalin and Bukharin refused a middle road. Further, none of the harsh accusations levied at Zinoviev, Krupskaya, Sokol'nikov, and Kamenev were recanted.[705] For all these reasons, they categorically rejected the proposal.

At the 18-31 December XIV Party Congress Kamenev, Zinoviev, Sokol'nikov, and Krupskaya each had a role in presenting the four's platform: Zinoviev warned on the kulak deviation, Krupskaya spoke against the repression of the party minority, Sokol'nikov tried to prove the merits of 'state capitalism' and to refute the existence of 'socialist industry' in the Soviet Union, and with impeccable courage Kamenev called for Stalin's removal as General Secretary.

What was most important about Kamenev's attack on Stalin was his comment that 'comrade Stalin is incapable of fulfilling the role of unifier of the Bolshevik leadership'.[706] His line has often been quoted, but historians have never bothered to delve deeper into understanding

[703] RGASPI 323/2/71/124.
[704] Deutscher, *Trotsky: The Prophet Unarmed*, p. 247.
[705] *XIV s"ezd vsesoyuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (bolshevikov): stenograficheskii otchet,* p. 249.
[706] Ibid., p. 275.

the context in which he used the 'unifier' remark beyond some superficial account that it was out of jealousy, for power, or the false claim that he was advocating a leftist position. As the argument has been made clear in this chapter, Kamenev saw that the party was deviating to Bukharin's revision of Lenin's ideas and in turn this action was spurring contempt from the party left. Isaac Deutscher has well illustrated that at no time prior had there been such rigid factionalism within the party.[707] The divide between the two sides was widening, and with Kamenev's Lassallean centrist alternative summarily dismissed and the 'platform of the four' in the minority, Kamenev felt it was the duty of the General Secretary, of Stalin, to find a compromise, not to dig in and favour one side over the other. Kamenev specifically stated that he was surprised that Stalin had disagreed with Bukharin's 'enrich yourselves' slogan, but was doing nothing to offset it.[708] Under Kamenev's leadership in 1923-1924 the Politburo had at least tried to reach a compromise with Trotsky. Even after he was defeated, the leadership endorsed the 'Lenin Enrolment',[709] in part because they believed it would promote worker democracy and appease Trotsky supporters.[710] Stalin was proposing nothing of the kind now, and that was why Kamenev complained that the Secretariat had 'united policy and organization and is in reality predetermining policy'.[711] Before, in the dispute with Trotsky and with the 'anonymous platform' of the XII Party Congress, Kamenev had felt that his position and Stalin's was the middle road. Now, in 1925, Stalin was not offering any centrist position or conciliation. There was in fact, a 'crisis of centrism'.

[707] Deutscher, *Trotsky: The Prophet Unarmed*, p. 228.
[708] Ibid., p. 254.
[709] The 'Lenin Enrollment' was a policy that Zinoviev championed at the XIV Party Conference to bring over 200,000 workers 'from the bench' into the party to help keep the party on its working class track.
[710] RGASPI 323/2/26/95.
[711] *XIV s"ezd vsesoyuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (bolshevikov): stenograficheskii otchet*, p. 274.

Testament to that crisis, the congress refused to even entertain the idea of compromise. Since Lenin had never chaired either the Politburo or the Secretariat Sokol'nikov proposed that Stalin should not, but could if the Secretariat became an executive organ of the CC.[712] The majority protested, believing that such a move would vest all power in the Politburo. More concerned with his authority than party unity, Stalin deflected the suggestion and enflamed the ire of the delegates by painting Kamenev and Zinoviev as plotters and schemers, accusing them of having demanded 'blood' in asking for Trotsky's removal from the party and outlined that the beginning of the 'first stage of the opposition' had been at the 'cave conference' in Kislovodsk where they had aimed to 'politicise' the Secretariat.[713] Not surprisingly, Stalin omitted the fact that Kamenev had been against the idea and had been his ally.[714] Moreover, Stalin's narrative made it appear that he was above the fray, taken by surprise.

Supporters of Stalin were quick to rally to his defence and ensured the platform's utter defeat. Kamenev, Zinoviev, and Sokol'nikov were heckled and jeered during their speeches. Kamenev, Krupskaya, and Sokol'nikov's call for open discussion was easily dashed due to their alignment with Zinoviev, who was well known for stifling debate himself. Indeed, A.I. Mikoyan aptly pointed out at the congress that 'when there is a majority on the side of Zinoviev he is for iron discipline, for submission. When he is not in the majority, even for a moment, he is against.'[715] Tomskii heralded Stalin as the lynchpin of the CC's collective leadership.[716] A.A. Andreev called Kamenev and Zinoviev's oppression a 'fairy tale'[717] and Yaroslavskii declared

[712] Ibid., p. 334.
[713] Ibid., p. 502.
[714] Ibid., p. 506.
[715] Ibid., 186.
[716] Ibid., p. 289.
[717] Ibid., p. 295.

that it was time for Kamenev and Zinoviev's spheres of influence to come to an end.[718] M.M. Lashevich's found little support when asking for Kamenev and Zinoviev not to be removed from their posts.[719]

Hoping to stave off severe political consequences, Kamenev proposed a resolution calling for the complete freedom of intra-party discussion and asked there be no reprisals for voicing disagreement.[720] Save the Leningrad delegates, in the footsteps of Lenin the Stalin-Bukharin group maintained their monological position and rejected his resolution 559 to 65. Uglanov's resolution upholding the slanderous Moscow Party Conference declaration passed with the same results. So demoralized and 'feeling ill', Kamenev could not attend the congress the final day.[721]

A New Interpretation

What has been established is that there was a centrist economic model based on 'state capitalism' that Sokol'nikov and Kamenev championed from late 1922 to 1925 that overcame the 'scissors crisis' and was proving capable of progressively improving the economy.[722] Stalin was well aware that his 'socialism in one country' would upend the theoretical orientation of their economic model and he, not Kamenev or Zinoviev, was the first to break from the 'troika'. 'Socialism in one country' challenged Kamenev and Zinoviev's understating of NEP's 'dictatorship of the party' by delineating NEP as a socialist constructing policy under the guidance of a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' in isolation, something incompatible with their

[718] Ibid., p. 205.
[719] Ibid., p. 183-184.
[720] Ibid., p. 522.
[721] Ibid., p. 875.
[722] See last chapter and this chapter.

vision of NEP which believed the country was not capable of industrial autarky. Furthermore, using capitalist models of production would not lead to socialism.

Stalin's ideological falling-out with Kamenev and Zinoviev's policies enabled Bukharin to hijack Kamenev and Sokol'nikov's NEP course. Bukharin was therefore not the champion of NEP, but a revisionist, destabilizing the centrist model in place to uplift NEPmen, kulaks, and the middle peasants with little consideration for the working class because accepting 'socialism in one country' while simultaneously viewing the state as 'proletarian' meant that Bukharin, similar to Lenin and Stalin, incorrectly felt that capitalist models of production in the Soviet state were not exploitative. Increasing the wealth of the state was synonymous with improving the working class, and with this logic Bukharin overcame his contradictions of expanding elements of capitalism.

Bukharin's policies antagonized many in the party and prompted Kamenev through his 'Bolshevik Centrism' to promote a centrist, *not leftist,* policy in hopes of maintaining unity between the maximalist left and the revisionist right. Indeed, his Lassallean idea for profit sharing not only addressed leftist ideals on uplifting the working class, but proposed a path which would spread proletarian culture via a new system of wage relations to allow peasants to join in solidarity on the path to socialism. Kamenev's desire to hold the party together coalesced into the 'platform of the four', where together with Sokol'nikov, Zinoviev, and Krupskaya they tried to convince the majority to return to NEP's original centrist 'state capitalism' economic platform. Historians who have hitherto looked at the 'platform of the four' as a leftist push or as an aimless policy are quite wrong, and the analysis presented in this chapter is the only one in all of the

historical literature which demonstrates that Kamenev had a definitive political and ideological line.

Stalin's heavy-handedness, illustrated from how he resolved the Georgian affair to how he wrestled the MPO and STO from Kamenev's hands through subterfuge and intrigue, created a 'crisis of centrism'. Rigid factionalism, an inherited characteristic of Lenin's monologism, became the norm. Stalin may have moved away from, and even disagreed with some of Bukharin's policies, but *his decision* to break from the 'troika' and resort to repressing intra-party debate and stamping out discourse was not a 'unifying' tactic. Shiela Fitzpatrick's contention that Stalin and his supporters were on the 'defensive' to preserve unity simply ignores that Stalin himself was perpetuating a party deviation by his breaking from the NEP policies of 1922-1925.[723] Only by understanding 'socialism in one country' as a policy deviation in conjunction with Kamenev and the 'platform of the four's' policies search for a centrist position is it possible for the first time to fully understand Kamenev's charge at the XIV Party Congress that Stalin was not a party 'unifier' and had to be removed from his post.

Finally, in order to overcome Kamenev, Stalin used his leverage in the Politburo and secretarial influence in the party to subject STO's day-to-day operations to Politburo authority, a practice which did not occur under Lenin and utterly changed the working dynamics of the Soviet system. Stalin also transformed Kamenev's tolerant MPO into his personal dictatorship. Force and coercion, not Kamenev's method of discourse, had become the methods of resolving intra-party disputes.

[723] Shiela Fitzpatrick, *On Stalin's Team: The Years of Living Dangerously in Soviet Politics,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015, p. 33.

CHAPTER 7

The decisive defeat of the 'platform of the four' was interpreted by Bukharin and Stalin as a mandate to ignore their critics and press forward with their own economic and foreign policies. As the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution approached, many workers and left-minded party members became ever more disillusioned with the prospects of the Soviet state as Bukharin's policies of extending NEP strengthened the capitalist elements in the economy. With the upturn of the economy from 1925, the party majority was seized by a great optimism. However, after 1926 that optimism began to wane as industrial output and investment slowed. Kamenev, Trotsky, and Zinoviev united to provide alternative leadership and to advocate a new course. After the XIV Party Congress Kamenev's authority significantly diminished. He retained at his disposal his position as head of NKTorg, his candidate Politburo member status, and his organizational experience to exert his influence in trying to shape the country's policies to adhere to a more centrist position. His actions bring to the fore the difficulty of a compromise position in a country accustomed to party dictatorship under the leadership of a man whose stubborn monological position harkened to the days of Lenin's inflexibility after the outbreak of the First World War.

The 'Second Party' within the Party

Yuri Fel'shtinskii has characterised the United Opposition as the capitulation of the party 'rightists' Kamenev and Zinoviev to Trotsky and the party left.[724] He casts Zinoviev and Kamenev as opportunists, believing that their adoption of left-wing views was nothing more than

[724] Yu.G. Fel'shtinskii, 'Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin and the Left Opposition in the USSR 1918-1928', *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique,* 31.4, 1990, p. 572.

a concerted effort to cling to power. This echoes the view historians have regarding the actions of Kamenev and Zinoviev in 1925. But, as we have described, their actions in 1925 were not a shift to the left but rather the continuation of a centrist position in opposition to Stalin and Bukharin's revisionism. In 1926-7 they allied with Trotsky to continue that effort on a compromise position with the party left.

There were two distinct stages of the 1926-7 opposition. The first was what Isaac Deutscher has described. As Trotsky, Kamenev, and Zinoviev rejected formal independence, the opposition acted as a second party within the party.[725] Their Workers' Opposition supporters were against this position and desired a complete break. It is the argument of this chapter that there was in fact a second stage. By 1927 the three men were no longer in disagreement with their supporters. They were in fact moving towards an independent separate party. The change in their position came primarily due to Stalin and his supporters' relentless denunciations. Motivated by necessity and a lack of a viable alternative, their new outlook marked a definitive change in opposition activity that has not yet been fully explored.

After the XIV Party Congress it was clear that the leadership had no desire to mend the divide with the defeated 'platform of the four'. Zinoviev's compromise solution to expand the Politburo's composition to ten members to include more opposition figures such as Sokol'nikov to broker compromise on major decisions was summarily dismissed.[726] Creating further antagonism, Stalin and Bukharin not only led the CC to reject Zinoviev's request on the 1 January 1926, they demoted Kamenev to a candidate member of the Politburo.[727] Then on 11

[725] Deutscher, *Trotsky: The Prophet Unarmed*, p. 243-245.
[726] RGASPI 17/2/209/4.
[727] He joined the candidate members, Dzerzhinsky, G. Petrovski, Rudzutak, and Uglanov.

January the Politburo removed Kamenev from his chairmanship of STO and then stripped it of any future independence by merging it with Sovnarkom under Rykov's leadership. This completed the intrigue against Kamenev that Stalin and Kuibyshev had set into motion in October 1925.[728] The Politburo then expelled Kamenev from Sovnarkom and from his post as head of the Institute of Lenin. Stalin and Bukharin loyalists, Rudzutak, Tsyurupa, and Kuibyshev became Rykov's deputies. The defiant Sokol'nikov was demoted from Commissar of Finance to deputy chair of Gosplan under Rykov's watchful eye. Meanwhile Stalin dispatched an obedient commission to Leningrad which garnered workers to unseat Zinoviev as chair of the Leningrad Soviet. He subsequently lost control over *Leningradskya Pravda* as well. He remained in the Politburo, but he was dead weight alongside Trotsky. Stalin, Tomskii, Voroshilov, Kalinin, Bukharin, Rykov, and Molotov commanded the majority.

Certainly the severity of the punishments raised the idea of a potential 'second party' in the minds of Zinoviev and Kamenev, but they had always been party loyalists and were not going to desert over lost authority. It was therefore the leadership's continued invectives which set them on the path to a 'second party'. Through provocation and denunciation Lenin had from 1917 onwards forced his non-Bolshevik opponents to become actual enemies. Bukharin and Stalin created their enemies in the same way. The harsh language found in the Moscow Party resolution was not recanted or softened. Having gained total control of *Leningradskaya Pravda* the party majority chastised the opposition ceaselessly without an opportunity for rebuttal.[729] Molotov later

[728] Stalin had previously denied Kamenev's accusations that he was plotting to merge STO with Sovnarkom to effectively diminish Kamenev's role there. See previous chapter and RGASPI 323/2/97/122.
[729] At the TsK Stalin passed a resolution that congress' speeches could be published according to the authors' wishes so long as said speeches did not violate congress decisions. *Pravda* published Kamenev's speech, but without his damning criticism of the General Secretary.

relished, 'day after day for a whole week we skinned the Zinovievites alive, surely for a week and a half, no less.'[730] Stalin personally tarnished Kamenev and Zinoviev's names by drudging up Lenin's 1917 demand to expel them from the party.[731] Under Bukharin's direction, the journal *Bolshevik* then rehashed Kamenev's opposition to Lenin in April 1917.[732] The attacks were so relentless that over six months later at the 14-15 July CC Plenum Kamenev was still trying to defend himself, saying:

> '…You accused us at the XIV Congress as people not believing in socialism. People not believing in socialism are not socialists… At that time from party cell to party cell went that shameless slander, and we submitted to the decision of the congress to be silent… you cannot shut our mouths and not give us the possibility to fight with that most disgraceful slander that the chair of the Comintern is not a socialist, that Kamenev is not a socialist… You put us in such a position that we are forced to violate your rule in order to justify ourselves.'[733]

Despite their remonstrations to move beyond the conflict there was no avenue for the opposition to make amends as they were constantly derided.

It should therefore be no surprise that when the Politburo appointed Kamenev as Commissar of Trade (NKTorg) against his will that he used the institution to challenge the Stalin/Bukharin line as he had no other recourse to defend himself against the bombardment of denunciations. He began by alarming the CC on 19 July that although both industry and agriculture had improved since 1925, a 10-15% growth rate in industry for the coming year would require that the state export twice the amount of grain. Agriculture was outpacing industry at such a pace that any decline in grain export for any reason, whether it was drought or

[730] Chuev and Resis, p. 217.
[731] RGASPI 323/2/85/148.
[732] See *Bolshevik*, no. 6, 1926, p. 89.
[733] RGASPI 17/2/246VI/4/32.

decreased international demand, would in fact retard industrial development.[734] Kamenev's remarkable insight proved true as this was precisely what occurred in 1928.[735] Kamenev well understood a point lost on Bukharin, that increasing the wealth of the NEPmen and the peasantry without first adequately addressing the inefficiencies of industry was only going to exacerbate goods shortages. Private traders had amassed nearly 400 million rubles in profit, and that number was only growing.[736] Half of all retail trade was still in private hands. Bourgeois practices were outstripping socialist growth.[737] Bukharin had yet to develop a feasible policy on how to win the peasantry over to socialism. It was a serious failing in Bukharin's position that he could not see that increasing their capital was certainly not going to foster socialist ideals. John Salter has shown that only in mid-1927 did Bukharin begin to take the growing economic power of the kulaks and NEPmen seriously enough to backpedal on his position.[738]

Instead of finding compromise with Kamenev's NKTorg, the Stalin and Bukharin majority continued to follow their own line. Flying in the face of the statistical data collected, as the new head of STO Rykov proclaimed in a resolution in a 6 April CC meeting that true socialist construction was underway. This was contrary to the findings of Kamenev's NKTorg and quickly roused the former opposition, especially when Rykov frankly admitted that workers would have to suffer a reduction in wages in order to maintain industrial growth. Kamenev denounced the new policy as 'industrialization at the expense of the working class'.[739] Again, he felt workers' wages should be safeguarded to win over the proletariat to the state and that increasing industrial

[734] RGASPI 17/2/246/viii/16.
[735] For more details on his economic position, see next chapter.
[736] RGASPI 17/2/246/viii/30.
[737] RGASPI 323/2/139/17.
[738] John Salter, 'On the Interpretation of Bukharin's Economic Ideas', *Soviet Studies,* 44.4, 1992, p. 575-576.
[739] RGASPI 17/2/210/17.

output at a social cost was imprudent and damaging to advancing proletarian culture. He therefore proposed that they instead base worker wages on the more stable *chernovetz.* Such a move would have allowed worker wages to remain constant against the inflating ruble. However, holding fast to Bukharin's questionable economic programme, the majority rejected the sound proposal.

Alienated by the denunciations and at odds over policy, the 'United Opposition' of 1926-1927 only came into being through Kamenev's determination. Unlike his peers he understood the delicate manoeuvring necessary to unite groups of differing views. His attempt to influence the British working class in 1920, his talent at the Vikzhel negotiations in 1917, and his ability to have held a 'troika' together with Zinoviev and Stalin, was testament to his ability. In 1925 he had tried with the 'platform of the four' to find a centrist position from within the party, but had failed.[740] In 1926, however, Stalin and Bukharin majority's ceaseless persecution and harassment of the former opposition forced him to alter his unifying approach. The Bukharin revisionist right was at present stubbornly irreconcilable and Kamenev therefore had no choice but to leave it out of the equation in forming new opposition directives. He therefore had to make an ally of his former opponent, Trotsky.

Deutscher maintains that Trotsky was the first to show a willingness to cooperate by backing Kamenev's amendments to Rykov's STO report of 6 April, but that is wrong.[741] The first initiative really came from Pyatikov, who from the party left joined Zinoviev and Sokol'nikov in supporting Kamenev in the CC. Then in the CC on 9 April Trotsky abstained on Kamenev's

[740] See previous chapter.
[741] Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed,* p. 263.

proposal. It was a half effort as Trotsky was too proud to make the first concession. Therefore, the real moment that signified conciliation was when Kamenev voted for Trotsky's resolution.[742] This vote finally bridged their longstanding divide. Kamenev thus became the coordinator of the 'United Opposition', and he held Zinoviev and Trotsky together as he had done previously in forging the Stalin and Zinoviev alliance.

Why ally with Trotsky? On the one had it was tactical. Kamenev had explicitly told Zinoviev that they needed to 'have a *platform* against *all questions*' (emphasis in the original).[743] This was a great departure from Kamenev's typical practice of trying to search for a single common cause to unite opposing groups,[744] but Kamenev had come to realize the futility of compromise with the immoveable Bukharin and Stalin. A single point platform was not going to win over the party majority, and he understood that allying with Trotsky would bring with him his left-wing supporters and sharpen their differences with the Stalin and Bukharin line.

His agreement with Trotsky was not a sign of opportunism. To hold such a contention completely disregards Kamenev's long established and consistent advocacy of centrist positions. He needed the left-wing support of Trotsky to counterbalance the rightist policy of Bukharin, but a close reading of the United Opposition's platform reveals that Kamenev remained committed to

[742] RGASPI 17/2/210/63.
[743] RGASPI 323/2/27/89.
[744] To list a few examples where Kamenev tried to unite opposition groups around a single cause: Kamenev had tried to rally the faction to boycott the Duma in 1907 for the 'police order' to the ballot box, had aspired to unite Social-Democracy in 1917 on the slogan of an 'all-socialist government', had effectively united the British labour movement in 1920 by focusing specifically on preventing a British war with Soviet Russia, had brought together the bourgeoisie and socialists over famine relief by focusing exclusively on alleviating the suffering, and had attempted to unite forces in 1925 by centralizing worry on the kulak danger.

his previous policies of 1925. In a note passed to Zinoviev *in his own hand*, Kamenev explicitly noted that the United Opposition was a 'middle path'.[745]

It is easy to see why historians have traditionally viewed the 'United Opposition' as a leftist organisation. There was much in their platform calling for specific improvements for the proletariat as a class, addressing worker unemployment, wages, housing, and various other social ills. Furthermore, aligning with Trotsky meant accepting his left-wing constituents from 1923, who aimed to promote industry and to raise workers' livelihoods even if it meant neglecting peasant and agriculture. In fact, former members of the Workers' Opposition came to the opposition's banner in hopes of once again raising that platform.

However, it is of great significance and has been long overlooked that the United Opposition also retained the 1925 centrist policies of the 'platform of the four'. Sokol'nikov and Kamenev's pre-1925 fiscal policy which demanded the tax burden fall on the country's capitalist elements was left unabridged. As in 1925, 'socialism in one country' was denounced in favour of the country's dependence on the international market to export agricultural products to finance the importation of technical machinery necessary for industrialization. Trotsky had opposed this 'dictatorship of finance' in 1923, and yet it was not discarded in 1926. Moreover, the United Opposition did not espouse the typical leftist call for rapid industrialisation. Kamenev's 1925 'slow down' slogan which shunned overly optimistic projections and urged caution in development remained central. The opposition's future 1927 pamphlet stated that there was no policy that could decide everything in 'one stroke', and that the Soviet Union could not 'leap

[745] RGASPI 323/2/28/14.

over' periods of development.[746] Although not said explicitly in fear of losing support, this was a call for a continuation of 'state capitalism', not a deferment to Trotsky's 1923 course of 'primitive socialist accumulation'. Further, Kamenev's warning of the kulak danger was central to the platform. Trotsky's arrogant declaration that Kamenev and Zinoviev had in fact adopted left-wing policies wholesale and simply mouthed his position is egregiously misleading.[747] The United Opposition was a 'middle path' between the party left and centre. *Together* the opposition voiced what they had all said before separately, that the party needed to raise the wages of the working class, introduce progressive taxes, end indirect taxation, promote democratic centralism, resist bureaucratism, and curtail unfettered kulak growth.

The union of left and centre was a difficult marriage. Trotsky's supporters thought the alliance frail and that Zinoviev would 'sneak away',[748] but the former 'platform of the four' had misgivings as well. Kamenev, for example, contemplated abandoning Trotsky and the left out of disagreement.[749] It was clear to him though that compromise was necessary and that the party left was giving as much ground to the policies of the 1925 'platform of the four' as they were to them.

The one area where no compromise was necessary was on foreign policy. Whereas Trotsky had been silent on Stalin's 'socialism in one country' until 1926 when he joined Kamenev and Zinoviev,[750] the two former members of the 'platform of the four' had not, and their platform from 1926-1927 was an extension of their 1925 refutation of Stalin's policies. This

[746] *The Platform of the Joint Opposition (1927)*, London: New Park Publications, 1973, p. 36.
[747] Trotsky, *My Life*, p. 410-411.
[748] Ibid.
[749] RGASPI 17/2/28/13.
[750] Richard B. Day even goes as far as to say that Trotsky was a supporter of 'socialism in one country'. See Richard B. Day, *Leon Trotsky and the Politics of Economic Isolation,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973.

was clearly visible at the 3 June and 14-21 July Politburo and CC meetings when Zinoviev and Trotsky lambasted the Politburo majority's stance concerning the General Strike in Great Britain.[751] At issue was Bukharin and Stalin's abandonment of revolutionary workers. The Comintern endorsed Trade Union Congress (TUC) in Great Britain had called a general coal miners' strike, but they had buckled under military force on 12 May, telling workers to return to work. However, left-minded miners persisted with the strike without TUC support. Stalin and Bukharin's majority refused to break off relations with the TUC through the Anglo-Russian Committee, leaving striking workers in the lurch. As head of the Comintern Zinoviev argued that the Soviet trade unions should unite with the workers directly and abandon the TUC. The opposition understood that Stalin and Bukharin's 1925 domestic policies which had promoted self-sufficiency had influenced the country to neglect the working class movement abroad.

Disagreeing on so many points with the majority, the United Opposition had in essence established a 'second party' within the party. Stalin and Bukharin's supporters certainly understood this fact themselves. The Stalin-loyal Mikoyan expressed their differences best when he noted that Kamenev had become a 'completely foreign person' to the party.[752]

The Demise of the 1926 'United Opposition'

The United Opposition failed for a number of reasons. The party majority saw no reason to compromise and saw dialogue as weakness. At nearly every party function the Stalin and Bukharin adherents raised Kamenev and Zinoviev's past disputes with Trotsky to delegitimize

[751] Alexander Vatlin, '"Class Brothers Unite!": The British General Strike and the Formation of the "United Opposition", *The Lost Politburo Transcripts,* eds., Paul R. Gregory and Norman Naimark, Yale University Press: London, 2008, p. 57.
[752] A.I. Mikoyan, *Stalin: kakim ya ego znal*, Moscow: Algoritm, 2013, p. 52-53.

their collaboration. Kamenev had every reason to hold the high ground in demanding intra-party democracy and compromise, but Zinoviev and Trotsky's past undemocratic behavior overshadowed Kamenev's entire history of working with opponents and his words appeared hypocritical.

Stalin's personal role was also significant in the defeat of the United Opposition. Planning its demise, he had warned Kamenev that 'the alliance with Trotsky will destroy you all'.[753] Under Stalin's guidance the Secretariat began to whip party cells into officially removing Kamenev from his last post as chair of the Moscow Soviet. Stalin's secretarial influence in stifling the discussion of Kamenev's party role in Moscow was so obvious that on 29 March the CCC confirmed to Kamenev that the Secretariat had clandestinely held Moscow meetings to ensure that none of Kamenev's supporters had the opportunity to speak on his behalf.[754] Unlike the Stalin directed drive to dislodge Zinoviev in Leningrad which had been conducted rather openly,[755] Stalin had to resort to intrigue with Kamenev because the party at large held him in higher regard than Trotsky or Zinoviev. Zinoviev, for example, was expelled from the Politburo in a CC vote 204 to 18. Kamenev lost his Moscow post primarily because Stalin made it impossible for him to defend his position. On 22 April 1926 in the Politburo, Kamenev declared that he had lost his authority solely because he did not wish to 'unquestionably follow Stalin'.[756]

That did not mean that the party majority did not eagerly follow Stalin's lead. Rykov, for example, as head of Sovnarkom essentially ejected Kamenev from NKTorg. Rykov and the

[753] RGASPI 323/1/155/2.
[754] RGASPI 323/2/133/1-3.
[755] See Molotov's account about the voting procedures in unseating Zinoviev in Leningrad in Chuev and Resis, p. 215-217.
[756] K. Ukhanov took over the position.

Politburo had begun to insist that NKTorg had to subject itself to Politburo purview, something that had not been the case when Lenin had headed Sovnarkom. Further, despite Kamenev only having led the commissariat for just over four months, Rudzutak and Rykov unfairly heaped blame on NKTorg for high grain and industrial good prices. The ruthlessness to which the majority vigorously attacked the opposition during one CC meeting was so intense that Dzerzhinsky boiled over with rage, had a heart attack shortly after, and died. Not wishing to see the same charade unfold whereby the Politburo would micromanage NKTorg to undermine his authority as they had done to remove him from STO, Kamenev resigned on 25 July.[757]

Nothing exemplifies the reality of a 'second party' within the party more than how the 'United Opposition' was brought to terms. The Secretariat was swift in expelling opposition party members. The opposition pleaded to the Politburo to end reprisals and in exchange they promised to halt factional activity and submit to party discipline, agreeing only to take up 'legal' means of opposition. On 8 and 11 October, Kamenev negotiated with the Politburo. He asked for an 'armistice', a shocking word which acknowledged that the two sides were in an ideological state of war. The opposition was willing to surrender, and accepted the dictated terms drawn up by Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomskii, at the 23 October CC plenum. This did not satisfy the vindictive Stalin who chose instead to ramp up the conflict by labelling the opposition a 'deviation'. Before in the party there had existed 'factions' and 'oppositions', but now under Stalin's leadership differences of opinion were branded incompatible 'deviations' with the party line. The leadership now defined what the true 'Leninist' path was and was not. The Stalin and Bukharin majority thus affected the very divide that Stalin now accused the opposition of creating. There was to be

[757] At his request Mikoyan replaced him. See RGASPI 323/2/140/1.

no peace. The CC forced Zinoviev to resign his post as head of the Comintern, and appointed Bukharin in his stead.[758] Then, the CC put Kamenev, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Sokol'nikov, I.T. Smilga, Pyatikov, G.E. Evdokimov, and Nikolaeva on warning for their oppositional activity,[759] and at the 26 October to 3 November the XV Party Conference expelled Trotsky and Kamenev from the Politburo.

Making a Party Enemy

It was not enough for Stalin that he had persuaded the party to view the opposition as moving outside the party; he wanted the man who had boldly asked for his removal to become a party enemy.[760] Kamenev retained the respect of many party figures of the establishment, such as Mikoyan, who admired Kamenev for his toleration of dissenting opinion.[761] Stalin therefore cunningly sought to discredit Kamenev by making it appear that he had been a Tsarist sympathizer. At the 14 December meeting of the Comintern Stalin drudged up Kamenev's signing of a telegram to Michael Romanov in April 1917, where Kamenev had thanked him for turning down the post of regent. Stalin hoped to reduce any party backlash by slanderously tarring Kamenev as a Tsarist conciliator. As outlined in chapter two, Kamenev had merely been trying to ensure the inhabitants of Achinsk take revolutionary action, and his signing of the telegram had nothing to do with a desire to placate a Romanov.[762] The party had mistakenly deemed his allying with Trotsky as hypocritical, and his reputation had already suffered from

[758] Writing to Molotov before the plenum, Stalin noted that 'no one will feel sorry for Zinoviev, because they know him well.' See Lars T. Lih, Oleg V. Naumov, and Oleg V. Khlevniuk, trans., *Stalin's Letters to Molotov: 1925-1926*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995, p. 116.
[759] RGASPI 17/2/254/21.
[760] He later thought the same towards Bukharin after 1928. See Cohen, p. 332.
[761] Mikoyan, p. 52-53.
[762] See chapter 2.

Trotsky and Stalin's continual iteration that he had opposed the October Revolution, but now Stalin's accusation roused a sweeping revulsion within the party ranks.

In this affair Stalin devised to enlist their fellow Achinsk exile, Muranov, to recall that the committee to which Kamenev had participated in voted unanimously for the welcoming letter's acceptance,[763] and Stalin gathered twenty-three April 1917 Party Conference attendees to provide evidence that at closed meetings the party debated Kamenev's 'mistake'. Then, with Bukharin's support as editor of *Bolshevik*, the two barred Kamenev from any significant rebuttal by having the journal on 24-25 December rush to print an issue with five separate attestations against Kamenev. Despite Krupskaya and 12 others backing Kamenev, *Bolshevik* only published Zinoviev, Smilga, and Federov's joint declaration that no discussion had taken place at the April 1917 Party Conference. Thousands of copies were quickly disseminated to CC members. With a Stalin-Bukharin Politburo, the leading party organ stonewalled Kamenev's request for justice on account that the Politburo was not a 'judicial panel'.[764] When he appealed to the CCC, the sympathetic commission's head, G.K. Ordzhonikidze, repeated to Kamenev on 5 January 1927 what he had already privately told Kamenev's supporter, V. Vardin, that the CCC was 'powerless to act'.[765] In fact, the CCC was extremely hesitant to do anything because the Politburo now considered Kamenev's refutations of Stalin's accusation as an oppositional struggle! Symbolic of his tight hold on the party, challenging Stalin personally had become tantamount to attacking the whole party.

[763] RGASPI 323/2/103/104.
[764] RGASPI 323/2/76/66.
[765] RGASPI 323/2/103/107.

Stalin therefore succeeded in erasing what little remained of Kamenev's good name. Even associates who had long known Kamenev were taken in by Stalin's deception, confronting Kamenev on the matter in person. It happened so often that Kamenev began to stuff his pockets with supporting documents to prove his case whenever he was approached on the subject.[766] With the telegram taken out of context, it was difficult for the party at large to believe in Kamenev's commitment to the ideals of the revolution. Stalin was truly making Kamenev not just an opponent, but a party enemy.

It was in this atmosphere of hostility that the Politburo resolved on 27 January 1927 to dispatch Kamenev to Italy to serve as Soviet ambassador. It was clearly a move to weaken the opposition by depriving it of its chief organizer. Although Alexis Pogorelskin has argued that Kamenev was 'ambivalent' to the posting, and surely he made the best of his situation by trying to organize the Italian Communist Party to form an oppositionist bloc inside the Comintern,[767] there is, nevertheless, no question that he considered his lowly appointment a form of exile. In his own words in a CCC meeting he had quipped that he would rather go to Achinsk than Italy, an insightful reference to his former place of exile indicating that he deemed the Politburo's decision a form of political banishment.[768] Pogorelskin's flirtation with the idea that Stalin selected Kamenev as Soviet ambassador in hopes he would be assassinated in Rome is also not supported by the evidence in the archive.[769] The Politburo had originally considered Japan his proper place, but on 5 November the country had refused his appointment on account of his oppositionist

[766] RGASPI 323/2/76/78.
[767] Alexis Pogorelskin, 'Kamenev in Rome', *The NEP Era: Soviet Russia 1921-1928*, Idyllwild: Charles Schlacks Publisher, 2007, p. 106-107.
[768] RGASPI 323/2/76/69.
[769] Pogorelskin, 'Kamenev in Rome', p. 103.

position.[770] Stalin was eager to remove Kamenev from the political landscape, but he had not yet fixated on his physical demise.

The Definitive Split

The difference between the opposition of 1926 and 1927 was drastic, and Kamenev's departure into exile marked the beginning of the next phase of the opposition's struggle. In 1926 they had seen themselves as a 'second party' within a party of socialists, but in 1927 they divorced themselves from the Stalin and Bukharin dominated party entirely, believing that their once beloved party was now so distant from socialism that it had become anti-proletarian, and together they discussed forming a separate party.[771]

There were two main reasons the opposition felt they had to leave the party. The first was the majority's unrelenting and intensifying bellicose invectives. Kamenev stated it clearly at the August 1927, declaring:

> '…when you qualify the opposition as social-democrats, defeatists, conditional defensists, disorganizers of the rear, agents of Chamberlain, and finally, counter-revolutionaries, you push the party and the Comintern to the edge of a precipice. This precipice is a second party...'[772]

As Kamenev later said, 'the Bolshevik party cannot conclude peace with either a social-democratic deviation or with those who actually serve Chamberlain'. Stalin's ruling majority had intensified its rhetoric to the point of nearly calling the opposition an outright enemy that in doing so they became their enemy.

[770] RGASPI 323/2/53/81.
[771] RGASPI 323/2/82/45, specifically his entire notes from 04.08.1927.
[772] RGASPI 17/2/317v3/41.

Secondly, the opposition's definitive break with the party in 1927 was over Stalin and Bukharin's international policy. In order to safeguard Soviet interests in Asia Stalin and Bukharin had directed the Comintern to back the Kuomintang government. This decision helped Chaing Kai-shek slaughter unsupported Shanghai workers.[773] With the leadership's greatly diminished resolve to support working class movements abroad, it was not surprising that Zinoviev in a message to Kruspskaya equated the Stalin and Bukharin leadership to the Social-Democrats of 1914 who had abandoned the international movement for nationalistic ends at the outbreak of the Great War by voting for war credits.[774] During the TUC controversy, in the Politburo Kamenev had made the same distinction when he freely called the TUC leaders 'traitors'.[775] At the July 1926 CC he had bluntly told K.E. Voroshilov and Rykov that they were making mistakes, 'the same as the opportunists of German Social-Democracy', but at that time it had been a warning, not a direct denunciation.[776] Due to the leadership's foreign policy blunders in both England and China, by 1927 Kamenev, Zinoviev, and Trotsky had become convinced that Stalin and Bukharin had now definitively followed in Social-Democracy's treacherous footsteps. True, Kamenev had not cast all other socialists into the enemy's camp as many in his party had done in 1914 and 1917, but in 1927 the situation was different. Stalin and Bukharin had already made Kamenev their 'enemy', and no hope for compromise remained. Yet, the opposition remained within the party out of fear of international intervention.[777]

Adam Ulam has charged the opposition with concocting the war scare of 1927 as a means to try to gain leverage over the leadership by presenting Trotsky as the only man capable of

[773] Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed*, p. 326.
[774] *Izvestiya TsK KPSS,* no. 2, 1989, p. 206.
[775] *Stenogrammy zasedanii Politburo TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b) 1923-1938 gg*, vol. 2, Moscow: Rosspen, 2007, p. 786.
[776] RGASPI 17/2/246VI/32.
[777] RGASPI 323/2/82/45.

leading the military to victory should Britain and her allies attack the Soviet state,[778] but others such as John P. Sontag have shed light on the genuine fear of impending war among leading Soviet politicians.[779] The idea that the opposition created the war scare to undermine the leadership must finally be put to rest. Kamenev's private correspondence clearly shows that the primary reason the opposition did not proclaim themselves a distinct and independent party was due to the war scare. Just before the August 1927 CC plenum, Kamenev wrote to Zinoviev and Trotsky that they had to 'avoid moving on to the line of a second party in an atmosphere of threating war' as it would result in the 'political collapse' of the country and surely spell doom for the Soviet republic.[780] Had they not been fearful of a real intervention, their correspondence indicates that they would have certainly created a new party.

The three's summer communication also sheds light on the events of November 1927. Isaac Deutscher argued that the purpose of the 7 November United Opposition 'appeal to the masses' did not have a 'hint of incitement to insurrection'.[781] He also asserts that Kamenev, Zinoviev and Trotsky were against the idea of an independent party.[782] This reflects the general view taken by historians of the October anniversary protest as simply a move to persuade workers to take up their cause to pressure the party.[783] The truth of the matter was first revealed

[778] Ulam, p. 280-281.
[779] John P. Sontag, 'The Soviet War Scare of 1926-27', *Russian Review*, 34.1, 1975, p. 66-67.
[780] RGASPI 323/2/82/45
[781] Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed,* p. 373.
[782] Deutscher, *Trotsky: The Prophet Unarmed,* p. 243-245.
[783] For example, see Swain, *Trotsky: Profiles in Power*, chapter 7.

at the XV Party Congress where Stalin and Bukharin's entrenched faction presented the event as an attempted coup.[784]

When Kamenev had returned to Moscow from Italy in the summer of 1927 before the 4 August CC plenum he had suggested to his co-leaders that they reject the ultimatum of the CC to be silent, let the congress condemn them as 'defeatists', and then after the XV Congress 'stand on the ground of a second party, *conducting a struggle for the overthrow of the current government*' (emphasis added).[785] Kamenev had suggested alternatives, such as remaining in a minority and continuing legal forms of protest, but it was clear by November that the party was not willing to tolerate dissent of any kind. Furthermore, the possibility that the opposition had chosen to act within the legal framework of the party was clearly not the course taken, as by November they had already begun to print and distribute illegal leaflets about their platform. Trotsky and Zinoviev were even expelled at the 23 October CC plenum for their actions. The November protest was therefore in accordance with the plan contemplated in August. The demonstration was a recruitment drive to gather support for a future move against the party after the congress, *to overthrow it by force if necessary*.

Their motions for revolution, however, were more symbolic than actual. From their experience in October 1917, Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev understood that to overthrow the government they would have needed to subvert the army. They knew their chances of doing so were near impossible. Further, the Communist leadership had reduced the working week to placate workers and although dissatisfied with their wages and living conditions, workers for the

[784] *XV s"ezd vsesoyuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (bolshevikov): stenograficheskii otchet*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1928, p. 287.
[785] RGASPI 323/2/82/45

moment were little interested in active protest. The leadership itself was also beginning to move leftward. Throughout 1926 and into 1927 the party had begun to gradually focus on industrialization as economic growth was tapering off. Against his previous assertions, Bukharin was now urging greater state interference in the agricultural sector and state planning.[786] By October 1927 he had even reversed his premise that cooperatives would build socialism and began endorsing collective farming.[787] For his part Stalin had adopted Kamenev's primary 1925 concern about the kulak danger, and he too favoured greater investment in industry. The leadership had stolen the thunder the from the United Opposition's warnings about the dangers of NEP and moving the country onto a more proletarian line by correcting their own policies. Keven Murphy has also illustrated that the fits and starts of the United Opposition's campaigns from 1926-1927 left many workers who were ready to challenge Stalin and Bukharin's leadership hesitant to lend their support.[788]

Clearly their efforts were derailed long before they received a lackluster response from both the party rank and file and the masses in November 1927. Nevertheless, they persisted. In the month preceding the tenth anniversary of the October revolution the three had tried to gain ground among the working class through secret meetings and gatherings, and on 7 November the United Opposition energetically took to the street to rally workers to their cause. Workers, however, were generally unmoved and apathetic. Not only had the leadership's leftward shift cooled worker dissatisfaction with the regime, but on account of the denunciations in *Pravda* against the opposition, Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev's appeal had greatly diminished. Within

[786] Cohen, p. 243-244.
[787] Ibid., p. 243-251.
[788] Kevin Murphy, 'Opposition at the Local Level: A Case Study of the Hammer and Sickle Factory', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 53.2, 2001, p. 347.

the party only 83 had signed the opposition platform, and even the 3,500 signatories Smilga claimed to have obtained were a paltry few.[789]

It is rather surprising then that given the lukewarm atmosphere to their calls for protest that Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev even bothered to stage their revolutionary protest. Trotsky, however, later supplied their reasoning, writing that:

> 'We realized only too clearly that we could make our ideas the common property of the new generation not by diplomacy and evasions but only by an open struggle which shirked none of the practical consequences. We went to meet the inevitable *debacle*, confident, however, that we were paving the way for the triumph of our ideas in a more distant future.'[790]

They realized their efforts were in vain, but proceeded anyway to leave a lasting mark for posterity.

Whereas the United Opposition had merely contemplated violent confrontation, Stalin had begot their 7 November protest with actual violence. When Trotsky and Kamenev had toured Moscow to rally supporters police rebuffed, cursed, and harangued them. Smilga, whose flat was ransacked, wrote on 18 November that the events were nothing short of a 'terrible intra-party terror'.[791] Kamenev, N.I. Muralov, and Smilga wrote that day that 'every Moscow party member knows that these fascist groups received instructions from the raikom Secretariat and that at the center of it all… is the Secretary of the CC.'[792] Stalin had even trumped up a charge that a Wrangel white officer had aided in the opposition's pamphleteering.

[789] RGASPI 323/2/77/162.
[790] Trotsky, *My Life*, p. 418.
[791] RGASPI 323/2/77/162.
[792] RGASPI 324/2/64/30.

The drive to revolution ultimately failed to counter Stalin and Bukharin's revisionism. Kamenev and Zinoviev gloomily exchanged notes:

> 'Kamenev: …Even free discussion in the party would not have given us a majority. The way to a second party, is it possible? How? What for?... The middle path, nothing will come of it.
>
> Zinoviev: …*there is nothing to speak about*. Let everyone go their own way.
>
> Kamenev: These are grave words for the bloc' (emphasis in the original).[793]

With Kamenev's words 'Bolshevik Centrism' in the party came to a decisive end. Never again would he attempt to unite opponents to a common political cause.

Aftermath

It may have seemed like great hypocrisy on Kamenev's part to capitulate to Stalin and Bukharin's camp at the end of the 2-19 December XV Congress and to beg forgiveness for being an 'anti-Leninist', but the idea Robert Daniels has proffered that he was afraid of being left outside the party is not sufficient.[794] While it is true that he had a change of heart considering the ineffectiveness of their November efforts, it was primarily the leftward shift in policy the congress accepted that moved Kamenev to believe compromise and unity were again possible. The XV Congress adopted a five-year-plan focusing on the development of industry and collective farming. Both he and Zinoviev genuinely felt that the party was giving ground to years of opposition.[795] For Trotsky, an ideological shift was not enough, Stalin had to be removed. He therefore continued on in protest. However, it was foolhardy for Kamenev and Zinoviev to believe that like-minded ideological pursuits could mend deep animosities and the November 7

[793] RGASPI 323/2/28/14.
[794] Daniels, p. 317-318.
[795] For more detail see next chapter and RGASPI 323/2/50/29.

demonstration was not something the unforgiving Stalin would ever forget. Stalin had explicitly stated that there could never be unity with the opposition.[796] Bukharin remained unmoved as well, backing the XV Congress to expel Kamenev and 75 others from the party.

Conclusion

The 'middle-path' so intrinsic to Kamenev's 'Bolshevism Centrism' had to muster an alliance with Trotsky and the Communist left and exclude the party majority position primarily due to Stalin and Bukharin's relentless derision of the opposition. The United Opposition which materialized in 1926 saw itself as a 'party within a party', not all that different from how the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks had co-existed under the umbrella of Social-Democracy. The United Opposition contained numerous centrist policies from Kamenev, Zinoviev, Krupskaya, and Sokol'nikov's 1925 platform and at no point rejected those views for a purely leftist position and therefore the view that they were opportunists adopting leftist views must be completely discarded.

The exceedingly rocky relations between the United Opposition and the party majority took an abrupt turn when Bukharin and Stalin failed to uphold the party's long-standing commitment to internationalism. This, coupled with Stalin leading the party majority to discredit the opposition by portraying them as party enemies forced the United Opposition to move towards a distinct and separate party. Stalin and Bukharin's policies and ceaseless attacks left them no hope that they could remain a 'party within a party', but out of concern for the war scare with England in 1927 they balked at founding a new independent party. Despite realising the futility of their efforts due to the lukewarm attitude of the working class to their position, they

[796] *XV s"ezd vsesoyuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (bolshevikov)*, p. 377-378.

pressed forward with their 7 November protest that was in spirit far from oppositional business as usual. Although their prospects were knowingly dismal, their demonstration was essentially a dress rehearsal to rouse the working class to their banner to, if necessary, violently overthrow the leadership with a second party after the XV Party Congress.

Chapter 8

At the same time that the United Opposition faced its political demise in November and December of 1927, the state gathered only half of the amount of grain it had obtained in those months a year before. Commodity shortages and the fear of war had led peasants to withhold grain despite the third year of a relatively good harvest. Lacking their own ideological course to resolve the economic difficulties, Stalin's leadership reacted and adopted defensive policies, moving from crisis to crisis. Under Stalin's direction in early January the Politburo sanctioned 'extraordinary measures', the use of force in the procurement of grain to overcome economic difficulties. Although Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomskii initially agreed, by February they were voicing their concern over 'excesses' in the campaign and feared 'middle peasants', and not just kulaks, were at the receiving end of state heavy handedness.[797] The Stalin and Bukharin alliance quickly came to an end and Stalin whipped the party machine and pivoted his position to the party left to gain support to outflank and remove Bukharin and his allies from power. Following their ouster, Stalin left NEP behind and embarked on an unachievable industrialisation drive while simultaneously implementing a violent, bloody, and repressive 'collectivisation' and 'dekulakisation' campaign to force peasants on to collective farms in an effort to overcome state deficits in agriculture.

The Crisis of NEP and the Centrist Alternative

Although Kamenev's pursuit of 'Bolshevik Centrism' came to an end with his party expulsion, it did not mean that he had privately surrendered his views. There is a dearth of archival evidence as to Kamenev's post United Opposition views on politics, but two extremely

[797] Cohen, p. 279.

valuable and lengthy personal notations of Kamenev's survive. Written only for himself in 1928 and 1929, the documents shed light on two critical points in Soviet history. Whereas the year 1928 marked the decisive break between Stalin and Bukharin, 1929 was the year Stalin championed the First-Five-Year Plan to set in motion an overly-optimistic industrialisation drive and a horrific collectivisation campaign. In the face of these events, Kamenev remained on centrist ground.

When it was clear an economic crisis was at hand, Kamenev was hopeful that the party would ask the opposition to return. After all, they had predicted the crisis, and on the 2 February Kamenev wrote in his notes that the party could 'only really cure the crisis with us and on the basis of our views…', and as economic troubles deepened on Bukharin's revisionist path, 'these views (and us) will become more needed every day.'[798] Sensing a rift between Bukharin and Stalin had occurred he felt the party would need the former opposition to overcome the party right.

However, Stalin did not need their support. Even though within Stalin's Politburo group Kalinin and A.A. Andreev showed signs of disapproval over Stalin's peasant policies, it was never enough for them to aid the rightist Bukharin group. Furthermore, Molotov, Mikoyan, Kuibyshev, and in time, the wavering Voroshilov and Ordzhonikidze, were all prepared to aid Stalin, against Bukharin, in directing the country away from NEP.

Stalin had no intention of taking up a centrist line, or any position for that matter, which would demand compromise and diminish his power. He was intent on carving his own path and for that he began to champion causes of the party left by adhering to their call to mitigate the

[798] RGASPI 323/2/50/29.

growing class differentiation in the countryside and in the city. In March and April Stalin evoked class warfare as an alternative to Bukharin's NEP policies. Stalin moved from overt methods of repression to advocating the mobilisation of poor peasants to extract grain from kulaks as advanced by Kaganovich.[799] Known as the 'Ural-Siberian Method' for its initial place of implementation, its ideological roots lay in Lenin's 'Committees of the Peasant Poor', which although abandoned, had been implemented during the civil war to serve the same class dividing purpose. Bukharin rightly saw this as a reactionary policy, not a planned one, writing to Stalin in August that the party was 'ideologically disorientated' and had 'neither a line, nor a general opinion'.[800] Applying the same principle to the proletariat, Stalin orchestrated the 18 May to 6 July Shakhty Show Trial to shift economic difficulties away from the leadership by casting blame on bourgeois specialists, denounced as 'wreckers', for causing Donbass coal shortages. Thus Stalin pitted trade union workers, long distrustful of specialists, against the remaining bourgeoisie. By winning the support of poor peasants and workers Stalin gained the political and ideological strength to challenge Bukharin's position.

While Stalin may have believed Kamenev was 'in his pocket' with his changing position on class warfare,[801] nothing could have been further from the truth. Kamenev called Stalin's ideological shift to the left to be 'thunder from a clear sky' and a definite 'turn to Leninism',[802] but he could not reconcile himself to policies which echoed the repressive measures of War Communism, nor to its defensive and unplanned 'jerks' and 'leaps' which were leading the

[799] E.A. Rees, *Iron Lazar: A Political Biography of Lazar Kaganovich*, London: Anthem Press, 2013, p. 94.
[800] A.V. Kvashonkin, et al., eds., *Sovetskoe rukovodstvo: perepiska, 1928-1941 gg*, Moscow: Rosspen, 1999, p. 38.
[801] Yu.G. Fel'shtinskii, 'Dva episode iz istorii vnutripartiinoi bor'by: konfidentsial'nye besedy Bukharina', *Voprosi Istorii*, no. 2-3, Moscow, 1991, p. 196.
[802] RGASPI 323/2/50/35.

country in a 'vicious circle'.[803] Repressive measures, even if conducted through the village poor, were a 'blind alley', exacerbating economic difficulties instead of resolving them. Kamenev had long defended the need for bourgeois specialists, and was not in favour of reducing their role. Further, War Communism methods required heroic working class zeal, and by Kamenev's assessment workers were 'lukewarm' at best. He remained unconvinced of grass root initiative, writing in his personal notes that Kaganovich and Stalin's policy was a 'bureaucratic parody on War Communism'; nothing more than a masked '*politseishchina'* (police rule).[804] However, Stalin's leftward policies meant Kamenev held hope that he could ideologically begin to find common ground with the General Secretary.

Kamenev had no idea that Stalin intended to use his *politseishchina* to abandon NEP completely. As the state failed to gather grain comparable to the previous year, Kamenev predicted that after the grain procurement had been satisfied private traders would be 'handsomely compensated' due to extra-budgetary anxieties, forcing the state to buy high-priced grain from well-supplied kulaks.[805] This is the very measure Robert Conquest contends would have resolved the crisis.[806] Kamenev, however, raised some valid points as to why such a solution was unpalatable. Strapped for money to pay for grain, he feared the Soviet Union would have to export gold, which would both devalue their *chervonets* and prove insufficient to cover import expenses against an export shortfall. Already receiving German loans, they would have to take foreign credit 'under any condition', making the country economically dependent on foreign capital. Nevertheless, he saw it as necessary step. Kamenev was much more adroit in practical

[803] RGASPI 323/2/50/35.
[804] RGASPI 323/2/50/66.
[805] RGASPI 323/2/50/63.
[806] Conquest, p. 87-88.

economic considerations than Bukharin, and far more economically literate than Stalin or the remaining Politburo members. He correctly understood that the grain shortage was a symptom of larger inherent defects and that no temporary 'extraordinary measures' were going to resolve a two-year misdirected economic plan. The leadership's industrialisation plans had reduced the real salary of workers. Their wages fell 11.7 percent in April alone.[807] Further, that same month NKTorg released figures indicating that the purchase of industrial goods in the countryside was up 17 percent from the previous year.[808] This was problematic as state reserves of finished goods had by June drastically depleted to a net value of 25.1 million rubles against the previous year's 286.6 million. The purchasing power of the well-off peasants had risen at a disproportionate rate compared with production, even with Gosplan's 13 percent projected growth in light industry. The goods famine was not subsiding, but had reappeared and was gaining momentum.

Kamenev found official remedies disagreeable and was remarkably accurate in assessing the weaknesses of the leadership's economic plan. Kamenev's NKTorg replacement, Mikoyan, wanted to reduce the prices of light industrial goods to compensate, but this meant correspondingly cutting production costs. NKTorg's plan was to cut expenditures on improving worker housing, avoid wage increases, and defer industrialization loans. To combat diminished exports NKTorg promised to increase industrial exports (oil, timber, cotton, etc…). This policy was clearly a dead end, as grain exports were falling short of their projections by 300-375 million rubles. Industrial exports would have had to increase 75 percent in production to combat such a deficit, a complete impossibility. Even Gosplan's most optimistic figures fell fall short at a 50

[807] RGASPI 323/2/50/61.
[808] RGASPI 323/2/50/53.

percent increase.[809] The Soviet Union wanted to achieve record exports at a time many factories sat idle for want of raw materials, and Kamenev believed Bukharin and Mikoyan's policies nakedly revealed their 'economic illiteracy' and 'political thoughtlessness'. [810]

Kamenev's harsh words were justified. His appraisal that curtailing industrial goods prices was a colossal mistake has been corroborated by Simon Johnson and Peter Temin. The two have shown that when Bukharin and Mikoyan's policies reducing industrial goods prices went into effect in 1927, state enterprises were unable to stay afloat and had to balance their books by borrowing from Gosbank. With greater price controls and increased inflation to offset bailing out failing enterprises, the cheaper industrial goods were quickly bought up and thus failed to reach the countryside. The 'goods famine' worsened as there was no reduction in prices in the countryside to counterbalance the low purchasing power of peasants. This in turn led to peasants withholding their grain and brought NEP to the crisis situation in 1928.[811] Kamenev clearly understood far better than the leadership where the country's policies had been headed and his 'slow down' policy would have allowed for more stable development as industries would not have required the bailouts necessary to sustain their overly optimistic projections for industrial growth to maintain Bukharin's 'equilibrium' in development.

In the summer of 1928 outside Moscow in Kaluga Kamenev outlined political and economic changes to turn the country around.[812] At the core of his critique was what he had been

[809] RGASPI 323/2/50/57.
[810] RGASPI 323/2/50/55.
[811] Simon Johnson and Peter Temin, 'The macroeconomics of NEP', *The Economic History Review*, 46.4, 1993, p. 760-761.
[812] The notes Kamenev kept on his ideas presented here were simply dated '1928', but based on the data presented in his outline it would appear they were written sometime before the July CC plenum. He was well informed by Sokol'nikov as to their proceedings and would have most assuredly referenced Stalin's change of course which took

saying since the civil war, that the country had in fact never established a 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. It was, to him, a 'dictatorship of the party', and in order to move forward the party had to acknowledge this inconvenient truth. With uncharacteristic frankness he wrote that those Communists who were 'thick-headed, bureaucratic, bumbling and gossiping about the fact that "it is impossible to draw the working class near to the government because it is a workers' government", *must be flung from the path of the party as carrion infecting the air*' (emphasis added).[813] With this in mind he addressed reforms that had been demanded by the 'the platform of the four' and the recently defeated United Opposition. Although he never mentioned the Secretariat directly, he blamed the 'lukewarm' spirit of the working class on the absence of true party democracy. Kamenev candidly complained that worker apathy was due to the Soviet system having become an '*exploitation of their political rights*' (emphasis in the original).[814] His statement is striking for its similarity to the protests made by the 1921 Kronstadt sailors and the Workers' Opposition. He even revived one of their demands, wanting elections from factory committees and trade-unions all the way up to the CC through secret ballot and not by raising one's hand.[815] Kamenev took the charges against the Shakhty engineers seriously. Tomskii's trade unions' inability to detect the alleged bourgeois sabotage occurring in the Donbass indicated that the Bukharin group had not foreseen NEP's inherent dangers, and that the truth could not continue to 'fall down from the pages of newspapers like a brick to the head'.[816] The party had to openly admit the difficulties facing the country as it had done when they signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. To regain party trust, he returned to the failed United Opposition's call

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place during the meeting had his assessment of the current state of the economy been written afterwards. His lack of its inclusion indicates that his notes were most likely written mid-June, just before the plenum.

[813] RGASPI 323/2/50/43.

[814] RGASPI 323/2/50/42.

[815] RGASPI 323/2/50/44.

[816] RGASPI 323/2/50/46.

to raise the living conditions for workers, increase their salaries, and to increase their number in administrative posts.

It is difficult to surmise just how Kamenev imagined his ideas coming to fruition. Returning to worker democracy would have required an unreserved relaxation of the party dictatorship, a ship that had long since sailed and was unlikely to garner any party support under Stalin's thumb. Furthermore, he knew very well the General Secretary was at the centre of the problem and so far every attempt to unseat him had failed. Kamenev was naïve to think Stalin was going to invite him to aid in resolving the country's economic woes, but he was deluding himself in thinking Stalin would relax his personal party dictatorship.

In the realm of the economy, Kamenev recommended an immediate decree to expand the use of *sovkhozy* (state owned farms employing landless peasants as hired labour) to bridge the gap between the state and the peasantry. Although he and Stalin were in agreement on this, Kamenev did not consider it an immediate remedy. True, Stalin was thinking it would take 5 years to have *sovkhozy* provide sufficient grain reserves, but for Kamenev that was too short a time for such results. He predicted that even after 5 years the best possible crop yield from *sovkhozy* would net the state 100 million puds of grain. This, he believed, would fall far short of a future peasant economy able to produce up to 1.5 billion puds, only one-fifteenth the total. [817] It was thus beyond the scope of one five-year-plan. This measure had to be combined with what Kamenev called 'cooperativization' (*kooperirovanie*), the gradual but absolutely necessary consolidation of poor and middle-peasant land holdings for cooperative production. The highest

[817] RGASPI 323/2/50/66.

stage of these farms were of course 'collective farms', *kolkhozy*, something the party left had long desired.

At face value his proposal on agriculture was the course Stalin ultimately tried to fulfil beginning in 1929, but what cannot be ignored is the significant difference between their views on how to implement the programme. Nowhere did Kamenev endorse the use of force to consolidate peasant farms and neither did he sanction the use of poor peasants to extract grain from the kulak. In fact he said that it was regrettable that such measures had already taken place and rightfully believed that if the leadership had heeded the opposition's warnings, they would have never occurred at all. Returning to his centrist 'platform of the four', he advocated that high taxation would push peasants to *voluntarily* join the *kolkhozy*. This had been the accepted plan of the 1927 XV Party Congress. From Kamenev's writings it is clear that he believed the *sovkhozy* would serve as the instructive model for large-scale farming. Poor peasants earning more as hired labourers would shed their concerns about large-scale collective management. Proof of *sovkhozy* profitability would in turn convince middle-peasants of its viability. This combined with high taxes would merge poor and middle-peasants into 'cooperativization' and then *kolkhozy* on a volunteer basis. Kamenev believed this process would gradually change the 'balance of forces' in the countryside against the kulak.[818] The kulak would remain, presumably until communism. The use of violence, arrest, class warfare, and execution to relocate peasants to collective farms at a breakneck speed between 1929-1932 was not a policy taken from Kamenev or the party left, but was a measure Stalin and his coterie planned, sanctioned, and implemented without ideological precedent.

[818] RGASPI 323/2/50/40.

With the weakening of currency reserves, a disastrous expansion of the goods famine on the horizon, an ill-conceived increase in state expenditure, an inevitable decrease in the importation of manufacturing equipment, and industry growing dangerously dependent on foreign credit, Kamenev imagined that his centrist 1925 'state capitalism' position could satisfy the peasant market to escape the 'vicious circle' of violence. Again, his 'slow down' policy re-emerged, advocating that the government raise the price paid for grain and on raw materials and reduce the tempo of industrialization. He also soundly advocated weakening the monopoly on foreign trade.

Aside from his proposal on relaxing the state's monopoly on foreign trade, returning to his centrist NEP policies of 1925 would not have immediately abated the current crisis. James Hughes has shown that the increase in peasant income had outstripped industrial production by such a large margin that even when the state had increased taxation in early 1926 it had done little to counter the disparity.[819] Further, higher taxation and greater grain compensation was not going to resolve the present deficits in industrial goods. That was why Kamenev proposed alleviating difficulties by allowing peasants access to foreign trade. This would have proved successful as it would in the short-term have resolved the lack of goods reaching the peasantry and given the state breathing room to realign its economic prerogatives and return to a more sensible economic programme.

It is difficult to assess whether Kamenev and Sokol'nikov's 1925 fiscal policies would have prevented the economic decline from 1926-8 if they had not been discarded in favour of

[819] James Hughes, *Stalin, Siberia and the crisis of the New Economic Policy,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 98.

Bukharin's. This is in part because economic historians have traditionally not demarcated Kamenev and Sokol'nikov's led NEP (1922-5) from Bukharin's NEP (1925-8). Their central focus has generally remained on whether or not NEP was a viable economic system of development in general.[820] With that said, from the literature that does exist comparing the two periods it is possible to discern that had Kamenev and Sokol'nikov's policies not been interrupted by Bukharin's, the grain problems in 1928 may have never come to the fore at all. L.N. Dobrokhotov has illustrated that NEP's decline began when Kamenev and Sokol'nikov's successful ruble reform was undone by Bukharin's reassessment of the country's economic priorities in late 1925. When the state accepted foreign credit to increase the industrial sector of the economy beyond what Kamenev and Sokol'nikov had projected, the 'goods famine' increased as investment failed to bring sufficient production results. This inevitably pushed the country's positive trade balance to become negative, as the state tried to overcome the shortfall through trade.[821] Kamenev's fear that the government would expend their gold reserves to overcome the crisis proved unwarranted, but only because the regime chose a path he had not predicted. Instead of buying grain at higher rates the state implemented a food rationing system in 1928. Then to overcome the problem in general Stalin used unrelenting violent force through collectivisation.

[820] Davies, *Soviet economic development,* p. 36.
[821] L.N. Dobrokhotov, 'Dolgaya zhizn' denezhnoi reform 20-kh gg.', *Denezhnaya reforma 1921-1924 gg.: sozdanie tverdoi valyuty, dokumenty i materialy*, Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008, p. 4.

An 'Unprincipled' Bloc[822] or an Alliance with Stalin?

Historians such as Paul Gregory, Robert V. Daniels, Catherine Merridale, and Stephen Kotkin have all stated that Bukharin desired to meet Kamenev so that he would not aid Stalin.[823] Bukharin was in a panic fearing the triumph of Stalin's far left alternatives and the resurgence of abandoned War Communism methods of grain procurement and through their mutual friend Sokol'nikov summoned Kamenev to Moscow from Kaluga during the July 4-12 1928 CC plenum.[824] Stalin had come forward in favour of exacting 'tribute' from the peasantry, a resurrection of Preobrazhensky's earlier idea to treat the peasantry as a colony by extracting capital from it to finance industrial development. Bukharin's main concern was that such a policy would alienate the middle-peasant and lead the country to 'civil war'. Further, in order for Stalin to avoid giving any credence to the idea that the United Opposition had predicted the kulak strangulation of socialist development, Stalin had asserted that class conflict intensified as socialism progressed. Bukharin described Stalin's theoretical understanding to be complete 'idiotic illiteracy',[825] and knowing how Stalin's intriguing had ruined Kamenev and Zinoviev, Bukharin feared losing his hold on the editorial boards of *Pravda* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. He even went so far as to state on 11 July that the 'disagreements between us and Stalin are many times more serious than all of the former disagreements that we had with you,' and that he, Rykov, and Tomskii had unanimously agreed that 'it would be better if instead of Stalin in the

[822] A label Kamenev used to describe the Bukharin/Kamenev meetings in a letter he wrote to Stalin in hopes of re-entering the party in 1933. See RGASPI 323/2/102/89.
[823] See Gregory, *Politics, Murder, and Love in Stalin's Kremlin,* chapter 9, Daniels, p. 332, Catherine Merridale, 'The Reluctant Opposition: The Right 'Deviation' in Moscow, 1928', *Soviet Studies,* 41.3, 1989, p. 384-385, and Kotkin, chapter 14.
[824] Although Kamenev had returned to work, he still resided in Kaluga. See RGASPI 323/2/102/54.
[825] Fel'shtinskii, 'Dva episode iz istorii vnutripartiinoi bor'by…', p. 196.

Politburo, there was Zinoviev and Kamenev.'[826] Stalin, he believed, only cared about keeping power.[827]

The evidence is rather thin from Kamenev's letter to Zinoviev as to what Kamenev thought of the meeting, and aside from Kotkin who writes that Kamenev held hopes to 'resume a high position commensurate with his self-perception and past', historians have largely ignored what would have motivated Kamenev to meet. Kotkin's analysis is wholly inadequate as it completely ignores Kamenev's ideological considerations and misrepresents him as being driven by a pursuit of power at any price.[828] Kamenev listened to Bukharin, but did not understand just how far Stalin was going to depart from NEP principles and thought that Bukharin was 'carried away' with his fears.[829] Between the two, Bukharin had a better sense of where Stalin's repressive policies were headed, which was odd because Kamenev's secretary F. P. Shval'be understood Stalin, complaining that 'he decides complex questions…with such force! Yes, talentless people decide all questions *only* with force, *only* physical force!'[830] It is clear from Kamenev's private writings from 1928 and 1929 that his primary aim in meeting with Bukharin in 1928 and in January 1929 was indeed to probe him about the possibilities of Stalin inviting him back into the leadership on the grounds of ideological agreement. At Kamenev's first meeting he inquired after the article Zinoviev had written concerning the 'right danger'. Kamenev had given the text to Stalin and was curious to know his reply.[831] For their second

[826] Ibid., p. 195.
[827] Bukharin indicated to Kamenev that they had to be careful, as the OGPU had tapped Bukharin's phone and Kamenev was being watched.
[828] Kotkin, chapter 14.
[829] RGASPI 323/2/102/89.
[830] RGASPI 323/2/101/20.
[831] RGASPI 323/2/101/10.

meeting, Pyatikov[832], Kamenev, and Bukharin met at a hospital under the pretense of seeing a sick comrade.[833] Not very interested in Bukharin's new economic platform, Kamenev questioned Bukharin about Stalin asking for his cooperation. The former oppositionists believed an 'economic Brest' was close at hand and were hoping Stalin required their help.[834] Disappointingly, at both meetings Bukharin knew nothing about Stalin's plans.[835]

Could Bukharin and Kamenev have formed a bloc? They both deeply opposed the repressive measures used against the peasantry to acquire grain and both opposed the idea that industrial exports should be used to redress grain export shortages. They agreed that exacting 'tribute' and alienating the middle-peasant was not conducive to the future of socialism. Bukharin's 'Notes from an Economist' in September 1928 even showed his willingness to consider greater investment in industry if its tempo was in equilibrium with agricultural prosperity. Bukharin also iterated his acceptance of collective farming as the highest stage of socialist agricultural production and desired that industrialisation proceed much faster than at a 'snail's pace'.

However, Bukharin's mild alterations to his views were not enough to overcome his and Kamenev's fundamentally different ideological principles. Kamenev wanted the gradual implementation of left-wing measures (collective farms, state planning, greater worker

[832] Kamenev had infrequently started to visit Pyatikov's flat.
[833] What opinions they exchanged were never recorded, but in Kamenev's secretary's notes, F. P. Shval'be indicated that confronting the 'ruin of the revolution' Bukharin had shown Kamenev his economic 'platform' and admitted that he was a 'finished man'. Although Kamenev's secretary provides second-hand evidence by what Kamenev told her, at the meeting Bukharin allegedly said that Stalin had the 'manners of a Byzantine potentate'. This would indicate that his naming Stalin 'Genghis Khan' in July was not simply a phrase blowing off steam. This however was nothing new, because as early as 1926 Kamenev had called Stalin an 'Asiatic'. See RGASPI 323/2/102/84 and Trotsky, *Stalin: An Appraisal of the Man and His Influence*, p. 417.
[834] RGASPI 323/2/101/84.
[835] Fel'shtinskii, 'Dva episode iz istorii vnutripartiinoi bor'by…', p. 195.

democracy, etc…) and the reconciliation of worker and peasant interests without the *politseishchina*, whereas Bukharin remained convinced that they could develop socialism with a peasantry increasing its wealth through private trade. Bukharin's inability to understand social process was so frustrating to Kamenev that in his private notes Kamenev explicitly stated that he was following in the footsteps of the 'god-builder' Bogdanov, the man who Kamenev believed had disregarded dialectics in practice and in theory with his support of Lunacharsky.[836] The 'god-builders' and Bukharin had both challenged the essential Marxian premise that only through economics could one find class consciousness. The 'god-builders' had espoused a path to socialism akin to a religious endeavour which did not depend on economic class relations,[837] and Bukharin felt that with the state in their hands, socialism could be achieved through capitalist methods, again, violating Marx's rule on class relations. Bukharin never understood that increasing the strength of bourgeois elements could not attain socialist ends. Bukharin erred in this capacity because he thought the state was already under the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' and could simply change course when it desired without considering its economic orientation. Believing the state a 'dictatorship of the party' which had to change labour relations and practices to move on the path to socialism,[838] Kamenev adamantly disagreed, and in 1929 Kamenev admitted that during the conversation with Bukharin there developed 'an absolutely clear picture of the theoretical disagreements dividing them.'[839] If there was going to be an alliance, Bukharin would have to move towards Kamenev's centrist position, and there was no indication Bukharin was willing.

[836] RGASPI 323/2/50/50.
[837] See chapter 1.
[838] See chapter 6.
[839] RGASPI 323/2/102/55.

Zinoviev and Kamenev had used Bukharin as just one avenue to try to connect with Stalin throughout 1928. Wanting to aid Stalin's position with their economic programme, Kamenev appealed to Molotov in hopes of the party allowing him publically to support the general line, but was rebuffed and told he was not needed.[840] He further entreated Voroshilov, Ordzhonikidze, and E.M. Yaroslavskii, at different times to no avail.[841] Stalin's group was immoveable.

No Place for 'Bolshevik Centrism'

The reason there was never reconciliation between Kamenev and Stalin in 1928 rests solely on the General Secretary's shoulders. First and foremost, when Zinoviev and Kamenev's six-month suspension ended and they returned to work on 22 June, Zinoviev became the rector of Kazan University and Kamenev was appointed head of the Scientific and Technical Department of the Supreme Economic Council (NTU VSNKh). However much he called NTU VSNKh the 'centre of technological enlightenment' to educate the masses, making movie reels to train workers hardly needed his expertise.[842] The fact was that Stalin and his supporters preferred that Kamenev and Zinoviev remain neutral. Allying with them would appear hypocritical and Stalin was not going to make the same mistake as Kamenev and Zinoviev had done in politically befriending Trotsky. By placing Kamenev and Zinoviev in positions devoid of any real party responsibility, Stalin consequently prevented them from making any serious atonement for their past opposition. Without the ability to make amends, they in essence became perpetual oppositionists. Orzhonikidze seemed the only one sympathetic.[843] He went so far as to ask

[840] RGASPI 323/2/101/70.
[841] RGASPI 323/2/102/55.
[842] RGASPI 323/2/141/5.
[843] A rumour from Uglanov's wife suggests that at the 6 December Politburo meeting Orzhonikidze proposed that Kamenev be restored to his position as head of the Institute of Lenin. This was also mentioned abroad in Trotskyist

Kamenev for some 'practical' solutions to combating bureaucratism from the perspective of NTU VSNKh, and was prepared to incorporate them into his report at the upcoming April 1929 XVI Party Conference as insight 'from below'.[844] However, as Orzhonikidze was in favour of high industrial targets, there was no hope that Kamenev's 'slow down' industrialisation views could have had influence.

To compound matters, Trotsky made it difficult for Stalin to believe Kamenev's sincerity. When Trotsky wrote to the CC on 21 October denouncing the leadership's path to 'Bonapartism' on account of the growing economic crisis, he postulated that Kamenev was trying to frighten Stalin politically. As a capitulated opposition leader Kamenev could wait in the wings and spring forward should the crisis exacerbate and find the leadership completely discredited.[845] During Kamenev's meeting with Molotov, the leadership had confirmed that they were indeed 'scared' of the opposition.[846] Writing to Stalin, Kamenev quickly denounced Trotsky as having committed 'the greatest mistake of his life' by not submitting to the CC majority and rejected Trotsky's accusations.[847] Stalin had the perfect opportunity to play the party peacemaker and unifier, the very person Kamenev had accused him of not being at the XIV Party Congress, but he obstinately held to his own course and refused conciliation.

Kamenev, who had always listened to both sides of an argument, found that simply having an open ear to Bukharin under Stalin's leadership was near tantamount to sedition. Stalin

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newspapers, but lacks substantial proof to validate the claim. According to the rumour, Bukharin and Rykov supported the idea, but Stalin outflanked them with a speech that swayed the majority against. See RGASPI 323/2/101/32.

[844] RGASPI 323/2/102/81.

[845] *The Militant*, February 1, 1929, p. 4–6.

[846] RGASPI 323/2/101/70.

[847] RGASPI 323/2/101/17-18.

struck in early January 1929, as Trotskyist newspapers abroad began to publish the letter which Kamenev had written to Zinoviev concerning the meeting with Bukharin. He was hauled before Orzhonikidze and the CCC on 27 January, where he confirmed the veracity of the letter and their consequent meetings. However, Kamenev professed his innocence as to having given it to Trotskyist supporters, declaring that such a thing would have been 'a crime against the party'. From 30 January to 9 February the Politburo and the presidium of the CCC debated whether their meeting constituted what Stalin alleged to be a Trotskyist bloc against the CC. Kamenev defensively objected that simply listening to one Politburo member's criticism of another did not justify a bloc.[848] With Bukharin's unwillingness to completely admit fault in talking with Kamenev, the Politburo censured him, giving Stalin the political impetus to force Bukharin out of the leadership.[849] The April XVI Party Conference declared Bukharin's ideas a 'right deviation' and as Bukharin had predicted, he was ousted from *Pravda's* editorial board and from the Comintern. Although he retained his Politburo seat, his political career was essentially over.

How had the letter fallen into Trotskyist hands? It was certainly not Kamenev who had given it to them. He wanted to return to Stalin's favour, not attack him. In Kaluga Kamenev had neither a secure writing table nor a steel filing cabinet, and it is likely that a Trotsky sympathiser swiped the document for publication.[850] Kamenev's ex-wife and sister to Trotsky, O. D. Kameneva, fell under suspicion, but fortunately for her she had been in Sochi on holiday from 16 August until 10 October, making it impossible for her to have played the courier as Trotsky had most likely acquired the document sometime in September when Kamenev's flat was left

[848] RGASPI 323/2/102/55.
[849] McNeal, p. 122.
[850] RGASPI 323/2/102/54.

unattended. Kamenev cast his suspicion on a Communist from Vienna who was temporarily housed in the flat while Kamenev was away, but no evidence ever substantiated his claim.[851] It could have also been the OGPU acting under Stalin's orders as Kotkin has suggested, but there is no evidence either way.[852]

Had Stalin orchestrated the theft, it played out brilliantly. To the party Kamenev appeared to have compromised his political beliefs with Trotsky on the left, and although untrue and unfounded, now appeared to have gone *volte-face* into Bukharin's camp. Molotov attacked Kamenev as 'disloyal', and OGPU boss and Stalin ally, V. R. Menzhinsky, professed that Kamenev's actions indicated that he 'harbours thoughts of revenge'. Menzhinsky's accusation was without merit. Kamenev's letter to Zinoviev had disclosed only Bukharin's thoughts and had not stated anything of his own. The letter only proved that Kamenev had remained politically neutral. From the party right, Uglanov criticized Kamenev for weakening the party. He understood that Kamenev's meeting with Bukharin weakened not only Bukharin's position, but that of Tomskii and Rykov and the entire right-wing opposition as well.[853]

Stalin had successfully kept Kamenev and Zinoviev from re-entering party life and made it easy for the party to condemn them. On 27 March 1929 the Politburo concurred with Molotov that Kamenev's conversation with Bukharin was an act of 'disloyalty' to the CC. The 23 April united plenum of the CC and presidium of the CCC passed a resolution calling the 'negotiations' an 'act of factionalism'. Kamenev, however, escaped punitive measures. The only thing he had

[851] RGASPI 323/2/102/80.
[852] Kotkin, chapter 14.
[853] Kamenev took offense and wrote Uglanov that 'even though we have serious political disagreements which divide us, we are old comrades – and that is why I cannot continue without issuing a decisive and categorical protest to your declaration.' He maintained that the true informant could not remain a secret forever. RGASPI 323/2/102/86-88.

not done was tell the Politburo about the meeting. When on 8 May Kamenev and Zinoviev presented the Politburo with a written declaration of their loyalty, the Politburo ruled to take no part in clearing their names.[854] Stonewalled at every turn out of vindictive spite for past opposition, Kamenev finally understood he had no hope at all of re-joining the leadership and participating in party life. The contest of leadership had become polarized between Stalin's new left and Bukharin's right. There was no place for a centrist position.

Kamenev's Evaluation of the First Five-Year Plan

The last substantial document in the archive which Kamenev wrote sheds light on the period shortly after March 1929, and it substantiates the view that Kamenev remained committed to his 1925 centrist views. The First Five-Year Plan set by Gosplan and accepted at the XV Party Congress that began at the end of 1928 followed the 'minimal' plan, but by the end of April the XVI Party Congress adjusted the 'minimal' projections to a new 'optimal' plan. Reasons explored by historian Holland Hunter, R.W. Davies, and S.G. Wheatcroft, provide insight as to the causes in increasing their industrialization goals. The threat of war, optimism spurred by finally marking industrial gains over pre-war values, personal changes in VSNKha and Gosplan, and perhaps most importantly, Stalin and his political ambitions to outflank the party right, all played their part in setting unattainable goals.[855]

As Davies indicated, changes in the leadership of Gosplan and Vesenkha throughout 1926-1927 had left those desiring higher targets at the helm.[856] During Kamenev's tenure as head

[854] RGASPI 323/2/102/85.
[855] Holland Hunter, 'The Overambitious First Five-Year Plan', *Slavic Review*, 32.2, 1973, p. 254-255.
[856] R.W. Davies and S.G. Wheatcroft, 'Further thoughts on the First-Five-Year Plan', *Slavic Review*, 34.4, 1975, p. 802.

of STO from 1924-1925, he had constantly fought officials clamouring for high investment targets.[857] With his removal from STO, i.e. the removal of his sphere of influence which had challenged the country's ambitious and idealistic economic goals, Stalin's influence penetrated the country's economic institutions. Although Rykov had succeeded Kamenev in STO, Stalin's rout of Kamenev had placed that powerful economic institution under Politburo approval.[858] Therefore the Politburo, not the chair of STO, was the country's leading economic organ. Furthermore, Stalin's ally in removing Kamenev, Kuibyshev, had been appointed chair of VSNKha in 1926, and by 1929 he had become a staunch supporter of rapid industrialisation. Those left-wing idealists within VSNKha and STO who had been restrained under Kamenev's 'slow down' policy became leading directors.

With the party having been unwilling to support Kamenev's centrist positions since 1925, the party was left with two diametrically opposing choices, Stalin's newly found desire to support leftist policies and Bukharin's much detested revisionist and rightist views on expanding the capitalist practices under NEP. Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' had aspired to dull the fiercest antagonisms of the right and left with prospects of more sensible policy, but with Stalin's triumph over Kamenev and Zinoviev there was no chance for a 'middle path'.

Understanding all this, Kamenev committed his gloomy thoughts about the prospects of the 'optimal' plan to paper. He repeated his long-standing criticism that the party should not set the ends before the means. In general terms, the whole Five-Year-Plan focused on future results and carried few practical measures for the present day.[859] Even minimum projections set

[857] See chapter four.
[858] See chapter six.
[859] This was exactly what Kamenev had told Lenin in 1917 concerning his *April Theses.*

improvements two years away.[860] In his public speeches from NTU VSNKh Kamenev sometimes stated this opinion aloud, but in the beginning when industrial goals were more reasonable he had toed the party line.[861] Yet after the party's acceptance of the 'optimal' industrialization targets, he privately believed that the Soviet Union lacked the industrial base for such a grandiose plan and that neglecting the XV Party Congress's original decision to increase trade, currency, and tax reserves would prove ruinous.[862] He was still very much the man of 1925, concerned with directing the economy through finance. He was not in support of the leadership's move to focus on heavy industry. He believed light industry alone had the power to end the goods famine and to restore peasant trust.

On agriculture, Kamenev's private writings reveal that he remained oblivious to the idea that Stalin was considering brutal force as a continued practice to push through his agenda. He did not know that behind closed doors Stalin was implementing collectivization by force; official policy indicated that 'extraordinary' measures were coming to an end.[863] Nor had Kamenev anticipated Stalin's December 1929 policy of 'dekulakization', which orchestrated the liquidation of the kulaks as a class by means of arrest, violence, and often execution. This was never something Kamenev believed could ever be a solution for long-term policy goals, and his writings show that he continued to advocate 'socialist legality'; repressive measures would only serve to widen the gap between the state and the peasantry.[864] As he had advocated since the civil war, the key to winning peasants to socialism was through positive incentives and taxation.

[860] RGASPI 323/2/49/131.
[861] RGASPI 323/2/49/21.
[862] RGASPI 323/2/49/132.
[863] Nikolai Shmelev and Vladimir Popov, *The Turning Point: Revitalizing the Soviet Economy*, London: I.B. Taures and Co Ltd., 1990, p. 48.
[864] RGASPI 323/2/49/142.

Socialism could not be built on repression. Kamenev predicted that the Five-Year-Plan would protract the economic crisis and increase its severity to the point where it would threaten the stability of the entire Soviet system.[865]

Kamenev was right. The 'collectivization' campaign was abrupt, quick, and conducted with astonishing force. Stalin's breakneck speed industrialization drive showed a marked increase in industrial output from 1928-1933 (but still falling short of their targets in almost every sector), but it was at the cost of reducing workers' living conditions, creating a terrible famine, and decreased agricultural output by 14 percent, contrary to the projected 55 percent increase.[866] Kamenev no doubt felt a sort of self-vindication when in 2 March 1930, Stalin retreated from his 'collectivization' campaign with his article in *Pravda*, 'Dizzy with Success'. About 60 percent of all farms had been forcibly collectivized, creating severe economic difficulties in the agricultural sector. The First-Five-Year plan had initially had more realistic ambitions, but conducted under Stalin party left-wing idealism had trumped the right and the centrists with one fatal blow, destroying any remaining peasant trust for either a Kamenev or a Bukharin plan of economic development.

The Ryutin Affair

Both documents reveal that while Kamenev abhorred the use of force that was employed in the countryside and was doubtful Stalin's programme would succeed, he did feel the party was moving in the right direction. The *means* to which Stalin implemented his policy and the *tempo* to which he set economic development were his fundamental issues of disagreement. With

[865] RGASPI 323/2/49/142.
[866] Shmelev and Popov, p. 52.

Bukharin, he labelled him a follower of the 'god-builders' and completely dismissed him. Combined with the evidence known from the conversations between Kamenev and Bukharin in 1928, it is clear that Kamenev was not searching for an alliance with Bukharin at all. Therefore, there is no reason to believe Kamenev was involved in any plots against Stalin emanating from the party right. Although he could have had a change of heart by the time the former Moscow Party secretary M.N. Ryutin[867] tried to unite all former opposition members to remove Stalin as the General Secretary in the wake of Stalin's catastrophic collectivization and 'dekulakization' policies, the evidence during his interrogation corroborates the narrative that he would broker no alliance with them.

In the spring of 1932 Ryutin wrote two documents, establishing the 'Union of Marxists-Leninists'. The one document particularly venomous was his 'Stalin and the crisis of the dictatorship of the proletariat', which explicitly denounced Stalin and his ruinous collectivization campaign. The platform called for the whole party, especially former oppositionists, to band together to remove Stalin. In June Ryutin's circle widened, and by 21 August in Golovino, 16 of Ryutin's supporters convened and elected M.S. Ivanov, V.N. Kayurov, P.A. Galkin, V.I. Demidov, P.P. Fedorov to its central committee. In spite of Ryutin's hatred for Kamenev and Zinoviev,[868] at the group's second meeting they agreed to use G.E. Rokhkin and Ya.E. Sten to pass the platform documents to Zinoviev and Kamenev.[869] Sharing a dacha, Zinoviev received

[867] Ryutin had been part of Bukharin's right opposition and had suffered political repression in the form of party expulsion in 1930 and brief imprisonment in 1931. Although reinstated in the party, he carried an understandable grudge against Stalin.
[868] As a member of the party right, Ryutin had unreservedly assailed Kamenev and Zinoviev at the XIV Party Congress.
[869] '"Delo M.N. Ryutina" v sud'be G.E. Zinoviev and L.B. Kameneva', *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, no. 1, 2006, p. 66.

the news first and anxiously waited with Sten until the 15 September to speak with Kamenev when he returned.

The discussion that took place had no semblance of conspiracy or acceptance in joining Ryutin. Initially Kamenev brushed off the document as a work of Trotskyists, but Zinoviev and Sten convinced Kamenev that it was the work of rightists. Based on the data presented therein, they concluded it had been written in the spring and was therefore already known to the party authorities and the OGPU. However, when Zinoviev saw Kamenev off on holiday the next day at the train station, the two came to the agreement that Zinoviev would call Kaganovich to inform him about the 'counterrevolutionary nonsense', just in case. Verified by Kaganovich's secretary, Zinoviev called Kaganovich three times, but Kaganovich did not return his calls.[870]

What was not so clear was whether Kamenev and Zinoviev initially agreed with the platform. Kamenev denied discussing it, but Sten indicated that they did.[871] They no doubt agreed with Ryutin's assessment of Stalin's lust for power and blamed Stalin for the failings of collectivisation. Yet, Kamenev stated truthfully during questioning that it had been impossible for him to aid Ryutin because with his 'entire soul' he was against the party right. All the evidence indicates that Kamenev was not lying to shirk responsibility. Besides, with what force could Kamenev have helped challenge Stalin? He was surrounded by would-be bourgeois intellectuals, not party revolutionaries. His friend Maxim Gorky had worked to enable Kamenev to essentially run the publishing house 'Academia' in all but name by September of 1932.[872] Further, even if he had considered it, which was extremely unlikely, the OGPU broke up the organization before any

[870] Ibid., p. 77.
[871] '"Delo M.N. Ryutina" v sud'be G.E. Zinoviev and L.B. Kameneva', *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, no. 3, 2006, p. 17.
[872] V.V. Krylov, 'Izdatel'stvo "Academia" – Beztsennyi vklad v dukhovnuyu kul'turu', *Vestnik rossiiskoi akademii nauk*, 53.4, 1993, p. 353.

action was possible. In fact, the exact day Kamenev first heard about the platform the OGPU arrested M.S. Ivanov, V.N. Kayurov, V.B. Kayurov, and V.B. Gorelov. Ryutin was arrested on 23 September. By the time Kamenev returned from his holiday, the affair was coming to an end.

The only real reason Kamenev fell under such a cloud of suspicion was due to Stalin, who sensing party discontent with his leadership in the wake of his catastrophic collectivisation policy believed that his enemies were scheming to challenge him. On the 27 September the presidium of the CCC pressed the OGPU to be more vigilant in locating those aware of the platform, and under Stalin's personal direction on the 2 October, the united CC and CCC plenum declared that anyone who had read or known about the 'Ryutin platform' and had not informed the CCC would be expelled from the party. Clearly Stalin had widened the net for the sole purpose of ensnaring Kamenev and Zinoviev. The CCC interrogated Kamenev and Zinoviev on 9 October under the leadership of Ya. E. Rudzutak. Less distinguished party figures such as Rudzutak, A.S. Enukidze, B.A. Roizenman, and E.M. Yaroslavskii, tried their best to provoke Kamenev with heated accusations. As was his custom, he remained remarkably calm. Contrarily, the same could not be said for Uglanov,[873] who broke down in tears during questioning. Zinoviev pleaded not to be expelled.

Kamenev asked the important question, 'In whose interest is it' to declare Zinoviev and Kamenev counterrevolutionaries? Cleary it was in Stalin's interest. With a declining standard of living for the working class, leftist opposition was stirring and directing their hopes on to the two fallen leaders. However, Stalin was to blame for the meagre influence that Kamenev and Zinoviev retained as he had forced them to remain neutral. Now the two represented a symbolic

[873] Uglanov had been tied to the conspiracy for his meeting P.A. Galkin, one of the leading Ryutin group members.

leadership alternative. It was for this reason that in February the OGPU began arresting numerous members of the former left opposition, including I.N. Smirnov, Preobrazhenskii, and V.A. Ter-Vaganyan. Having read the Ryutin platform, Zinoviev and Kamenev gave Stalin the excuse for the CCC to expel them both from the party. On 11 October the OGPU sentenced them to three years exile in Siberia. Kamenev was sent to Minusinsk, 290 kilometres from where he had lived in exile under the Tsar.

Despite the convincing evidence that Kamenev and Zinoviev had played absolutely no part in trying to ally with Bukharin in 1928 or aid Ryutin against Stalin in 1932, there remains two potentially damning pieces of evidence against him. On the 20 February 1933 Kamenev wrote a letter to the Politburo and the CCC denouncing his past actions in the United Opposition, admitting to negotiating with Bukharin for an 'unprincipled bloc', praising 'socialism in one country', and declaring that collectivization was the greatest thing since the October Revolution, calling it both 'theoretical and practical'.[874] *Pravda* printed this letter on 18 May and Zinoviev's on 20 May. To make amends Kamenev wrote to Stalin on 22 February 1933 reminding him of their past friendship and praising his leadership for uniting the party, something he had thought impossible. He then heaped the blame on himself for having created a neutral position by which 'any enemy of the party and of your leadership could place hopes on my possible sympathy...' concluding that 'years from the party have taught me that I can work under your leadership…'[875]

Why then did he falsely prostrate himself before the party? With Stalin feeling politically vulnerable the leadership needed to remove any possible threat to their power and were therefore

[874] RGASPI 323/1/155/5.
[875] RGASPI 323/1/155/2-4.

willing to allow Kamenev and Zinoviev to publically break their neutrality. Kamenev had no interest in politics and appeased Stalin to return to the literary work he now considered far more important than events in the past he could not change or a socialism he could no longer build with peasant trust irrevocably destroyed. In fact, he was so consumed with his literary efforts that in exile he wrote articles and introductions for Gogol's *Dead Souls*, a biography of Chernyshevskii, and a preface to Herzen's *The Bell* reprint.[876] This explains why Kamenev stopped keeping personal notes. There was no centrist position that could effectively restore the damage Stalin had done with collectivisation.

With Gorky's help and his confession, Stalin allowed Kamenev to officially head the 'Academia' publishing house. By the end of April Kamenev had returned to Moscow, and in December the CC and CCC returned his party card. However, his exile had taken its toll. Upon meeting Kamenev, children's writer K.I. Chukovskii[877] wrote of him in his diary 1 June 1933 that 'During the year his head had turned entirely grey.'[878] Even though Kamenev had given up on politics, Stalin had not forgotten about him and Kamenev was exhausted in trying to prove his innocence.

Conclusion

Kamenev's personal writings prove that he harboured no desire to cooperate with Bukharin and the party right to challenge Stalin. To the contrary, they reveal that he was anticipating joining Stalin against Bukharin in hopes of reviving the working class with the

[876] Krylov, 'Izdatel'stvo "Academia", p. 354.
[877] Chikovksii shared Kamenev's interest in N. Nekrasov, and the two often met in collaboration on the publishing of his works.
[878] Quoted in Krylov, 'Izdatel'stvo "Academia", p. 354.

acknowledgement that they had in fact a 'dictatorship of the party' and not a 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. Kamenev abhorred Stalin's *politseishchina*, but he thought the Politburo's 'extraordinary measures' were only a temporary policy. The only reason the alliance did not occur was because Stalin and the leadership did not want to share any power with Kamenev and Zinoviev, make compromises to the two's centrist views, or lose face in reconciling with previous opponents. The two were forced into a position of neutrality whereby without the possibility for atonement, the leadership kept them perpetual enemies. Under Bukharin's economic policies the party had led the state to its 1928 crisis, something Kamenev's more moderate policies could have avoided. By 1929 Kamenev had become increasingly sceptical of Stalin's leftward policies in overcoming the 'extraordinary measures' taken against the peasantry and was convinced his centrist position following his and Sokol'nikov's 1925 fiscal taxation policies was the key to restoring peasant trust. His 1929 notes indicate that he was not prepared to challenge Stalin directly. He remained silent and his personal notations came to an end. His turn to a literary career and abandonment of politics illustrates that after Stalin initiated his collectivisation and 'dekulakization' campaigns he stopped contemplating future socialist development. He felt the path to socialism was irrevocably destroyed.

However, Stalin's disastrous campaign in the countryside worried the General Secretary immensely. He therefore ensured that together with Ryutin's 'Union of Marxists-Leninists', the neutral Kamenev and Zinoviev were arrested and exiled so that no leadership alternative was possible. This occurred despite the obvious fact that aiding Ryutin's rightist agenda was against Kamenev's 'entire soul', and that outside having read Ryutin's platform there was no evidence they were going to join his cause. Even the ambitious Zinoviev had made efforts to inform

Kaganovich of the Ryuitin platform to show party loyalty. Nevertheless, at the personal will of Stalin they were exiled and re-entered the party only after appeasing the party dictator with false confessions.

CHAPTER 9

From 1933 to 1936 the crisis of collectivization and industrialization, and above all the famine crisis of 1932-3 abated, and the economy entered a phase of relatively stable growth. Political opposition to the regime receded but misgivings within the party concerning the way policy had earlier been handled remained and evidence of this discontent with Stalin and his policies may have surfaced behind the scenes at the XVII party congress. The assassination of S.M. Kirov in Leningrad in December 1934 stoked a new wave of repression, with Kamenev and Zinoviev being arrested. Whilst there is evidence of a certain relaxation of repression in 1934 and 1935, the threat of war became more ominous. In August 1936 the first major show trial signaled a dramatic new phase in the drive against internal opponents of the regime, with the execution of Kamenev and Zinoviev and other defendants. There is no archival evidence to shed light on Kamenev's views in this period, but we have evidence of his thinking from his writings on Russian literature, especially those works that relate to the development of the Russian revolutionary movement from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.

The Aesopian Kamenev

In 1930 Kamenev developed his career outside politics. Initially his writing was devoid of contemporary political meaning. That year he worked on the republication of Herzen's *The Bell* (*Kolokol*) newspaper, and wrote an introduction to N.N. Apostolov's work on Lev Tolstoy.[879] In 1931 he wrote an introduction for I.S. Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons,*[880] and edited a three volume

[879] Lev Kamenev, 'Predislovie', in *Lev Tolstoi i russkoe samoderzhavie*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1930, p. 1-2.
[880] Lev Kamenev, 'Predislovie', in I.S. Turgenev, *Otsy i deti*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1931, p. 5-13.

collection of works by A.I. Herzen.[881] At the end of July 1931 he joined Lunacharsky at the Institute of New Russian Literature.[882] At no point in this time period had Kamenev written any Aesopian attacks on Stalin.[883] His son's wife recalled that in these years that all Kamenev 'ever thought about was books, art, and music. He never discussed politics at home.'[884]

It was only in 1933 after Stalin vindictively authorised Kamenev and Zinoviev's exile that Kamenev employed Aesopian methods to attack Stalin and his policies through works of literary criticism. Alexis Pogorelskin argues that Kamenev had already used such methods in November 1928 when he wrote that Chernyshevskii had defiantly written that even 'under censorship articles can educate real revolutionaries.' This she argues was a reflection of an emergent alliance of Bukharin and Kamenev.[885] Whilst both Bukharin and Kamenev to some degree shared their assessment of Stalin as 'Asiatic' or a 'Genghis Khan', the two remained poles apart politically. His choice of words might instead reflect his own frustrations of writing under censorship, with an implied criticism of the General Secretary's penchant for using administrative and coercive means to overcome political and economic problems. His real Aesopian work did not fully commence until Kamenev was forced into exile and then publically manipulated to praise the very policies he deplored.

[881] RGASPI 323/2/1/175/39-97.
[882] V.V. Krylov, 'Neopublikovannoe predislovie L.B. Kameneva k pereizdaniyu "Kolokola" A.I. Gertsena', in *Arkheograficheskii ezhegodnik za 1994 god*, ed., S.O. Shmidt, Moscow: 'Nauka', 1996, p. 329.
[883] He no longer considered himself a leader and put all his effort into his work at *Glavkontstskom* and the publishing house 'Academia', working more than 18 hours a day. See '"Delo M.N. Ryutina" v sud'be G.E. Zinoviev and L.B. Kameneva', *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, no. 3, 2006, p. 12.
[884] Quoted from Larissa Vasilieva, *Kremlin Wives*, New York: Arcade Publishing, 1994, p. 48.
[885] For her assertion of Kamenev's aiding Bukharin, see Alexis Pogorelskin, 'Kamenev and the Uses of Chernyshevskii in Opposition to Stalin, 1928-1933', unpublished paper, presented to SIPS Seminar, CREES, University of Birmingham, October 15, 1997, and RGASPI 323/2/174/27.

As Pogorelskin shows, in writing about Chernyshevskii in 1933 Kamenev clearly adopted Aesopian means of commenting on contemporary politics. Kamenev focused on the nineteenth century writer's disdain for 'tribute' exacted from the peasantry to challenge Stalin's collectivisation campaign. The charge that the Soviet regime was exacting tribute from the peasantry as part of a system of military-feudal exploitation was something that had also been voiced by Bukharin. Stalin had spiritedly responded to these charges in his speech to the CC and CCC in April 1929 on 'The Right Deviation in the Party'.[886] Kamenev now returned to this theme. The state, Chernyshevskii contended, was acting as if they were a conquering nation. The parallel was with the Soviet state's colonisation of the peasantry to finance industry. Pogorelskin also notes how Kamenev accentuated the Tsar's role in overseeing the fabrication of evidence used in Chernyshevkii's 1862 arrest; uncannily resembling Stalin's own interest in the meager materials that were used in justifying Kamenev's exile concerning Ryutin.[887]

In Kamenev's unpublished preface to Herzen's *The Bell*, he again specifically addressed state sponsored violence. Kamenev quoted a poignant letter from Herzen where he described growing up under 'terror' and 'under the black wings of the secret police'. No doubt this was selected to speak of Stalin's Russia. Kamenev reminded 'contemporary readers' of the value of *The Bell* in its account of the 'scourging Tsarist court, bureaucracy, nobility, and its now shocking descriptions of the suppression of peasant unrest…' Here Kamenev directed 'contemporary readers' to the parallels between the brutal policies of the Tsarist state and Stalin's rule.

[886] I.V. Stalin, *Collected Works*, vol. 12, London: Red Star Press LTD, 1955, p. 56-57.
[887] Ibid, p. 18.

There is one work that personifies Kamenev's disagreement with Stalin best, and that was his introduction to Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*, where Kamenev thrice accorded Machiavelli the position 'secretary'. The title equated Machiavelli as the Florentine secretary, the master of duplicity and subterfuge, with the General Secretary. Through his words about Machiavelli, Kamenev illuminated that Stalin had 'no gift for profound philosophical enquiry,' and that 'the social content of power, its social determination, interested him very little'. In essence, Stalin cared little for Marxism and was only interested in power.[888] Kamenev was right to make this statement. True, Stalin had applied Marxian dialectics to the countryside to understand social processes after the United Opposition had been defeated, and there are those such as Robert McNeal who believe that Stalin's leftist conversion was sincere,[889] but the fact Stalin did not deviate from that line after the defeat of the right is not convincing proof of his changed convictions or of his Marxist understanding; there was never another opposition for him to overcome to test his beliefs. Stalin had his own views and objectives, but his most important theoretical ideas were born out of conflict to overcome his opponents. Stalin had advanced 'socialism in one country' in conflict with Trotsky and in 1925 wielded it to dismantle Kamenev and Sokol'nikov's economic policies. Then, Stalin converted to the left and proffered the theory that class struggle intensifies as socialism approaches only at the moment he needed to overcome Bukharin.

One of the most revealing passages in Kamenev's introduction to *The Prince* was not about Stalin, but about Kamenev. In the introduction Kamenev referenced Lassalle as the exposer

[888] E.A. Rees, *Political Thought from Machiavelli to Stalin: Revolutionary Machiavellism*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p.198-205.
[889] McNeal, p. 118.

of Machiavelli's vision to simply 'express what is'.[890] Kamenev could have selected any revolutionary's opinion on Machiavelli, but he chose Lassalle specifically for the comparison. Lassalle had been the sole reason Kamenev had started on his revolutionary career and the labour leader had heavily influenced numerous of Kamenev's post-revolutionary policies. It is clear that in the introduction Stalin was Machiavelli and Kamenev was Lassalle. By referencing Lassalle he expressed to readers the two Communists' fundamentally different approach to politics. Similar to Lassalle, Kamenev had sought unity, bringing opposing forces together by focusing on unifying objectives along centrist lines. Stalin was the divider, the Machiavellian man bent on destroying opponents and exerting total control. Again, Kamenev's depiction was an accurate one. Stalin could have allowed Kamenev and Zinoviev to support him in 1928, but he had refused solely due to issues of power. Kamenev's view of himself as Lassalle was also fair. From the Duma debate in 1907 to his 1925 NEP policies and ideas, time and time again Kamenev had sought unifying goals between opponents, even with Trotsky, and on one occasion, the bourgeoisie.

Lies, Fabrications, and a Show Trial

The accuracy of Kamenev's depiction of Stalin and his Machiavellian aspirations finds abundant confirmation in the way Stalin personally directed the police and the party to hound Kamenev and Zinoviev. On 1 December 1934, Leonid Nikolaev assassinated Leningrad party boss Kirov at Smolny. Whether Stalin planned the killing remains unknown, but there is no question that he used Kirov's death to remove Kamenev and Zinoviev from the political scene

[890] Perry Anderson provided the complete translation of Kamenev's introduction to *The Prince* in Chimen Abramsky, 'Kamenev's Last Essay', *New Left Review*, May-June, 1962, p. 34-38. It was then reproduced in Rees, *Political Thought from Machiavelli to Stalin*, p. 200-203.

permanently. It did not take Stalin long to instruct NKVD head, N.I. Ezhov, to 'Find the killer among the Zinovievites'. The two were arrested on 16 December 1934. Ezhov, evidently with Stalin's connivance, fabricated Kamenev and Zinoviev's link to the murder. Kamenev and Zinoviev were accused through their continual opposition of having influenced Nikolaev's actions, labeling their group the 'Anti-Soviet United Trotskyist-Zinovievite Centre'. Stalin invited the deputy procurator, A.Ya. Vyshinskii, into their circle to aid in framing Zinoviev and Kamenev. Arkady Vaksberg has shown that although Stalin personally took direction, he allowed Vyshinskii the necessary leeway in falsifying the details of the charges.[891] Kamenev and Zinoviev were charged with being associated with the conspiracy of the 'Moscow Centre', which allegedly had been conspiring to remove the CC leadership since 1928,[892] which, as has been shown, was a fabrication. Further, an NKVD worker, A.I. Katsaf, recalled in 1956 that during his 14 and 15 January 1935 interrogation, Kamenev denied the accusation even when he was promised not to be executed for his admission. In fact, the only thing Kamenev and Zinoviev acknowledged took place was that for a time after 1928 they together with G.E. Evdokimov, I.P. Bakaev, A.S. Kuklin, and Ya.V. Sharov met to discuss rumours, politics, and news.[893]

Their denials only strengthened Stalin and Ezhov's resolve. They circulated a closed letter to the CC 17-18 January 1935, maintaining that the evidence showed conclusively that Zinovievite groups had conspired to kill Kirov. Indirectly responsible, Stalin requested the CC to

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[891] Arkady Vaksberg, *The Prosecutor and the Prey: Vyshinksy and the 1930s Moscow Show Trials*, trans., Jan Butler, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990, p. 79

[892] G.A. Moiseevich, K.A. Sergeevich, S.B. Naumovich, E.G. Eremeevich, B.I. Petrovich, Sh. Ya. Vasil'evich, G.I. Stepanovich, Ts. N. Alekseevich, F.G. Fedorovich, G.S. Vikhailovich, T.I. Ivanovich, F.L. Yakovkevich, G.A. Vladimirovich, A.A. Isaevich, P.A. Viktorovich, B.B. L'vovich, and B.A. Fabianovich were also charged as co-conspirators in the 'Moscow Centre'.

[893] I.V. Kurilov, N.N. Mikhailov, and V.P. Naumov, eds., *Reabilitatsiya: Politicheskie protsessy 30-50-kh* godov, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1991, p. 164-168.

'arrest and isolate' the anti-party groups, which after only a day's consideration the CC accepted. Convicted of 'moral complicity', as leader Zinoviev was sentenced to ten years in prison, Kamenev five.

Stalin, however, appears to have been dissatisfied with the prison sentences that were handed out. In January Kamenev's relatives were implicated in the imagined 'Kremlin Affair' which was aimed at pressuring him to falsely confess. With arrests starting 20 January and continuing until 5 February, deputy chair of the OGPU Ya.S. Agranov and Commissar of Internal Affairs G.G. Yagoda worked with Stalin to unmask a conspiracy within the Kremlin to kill the General Secretary. Kamenev's brother's ex-wife who worked in Molotov's personal library, N.A. Rozenfelda, was implicated in the plot.[894] Angering her accusers with denials, the police expanded their efforts and soon her ex-husband (Kamenev's brother) B.N. Rozenfeld and her son (also B.N. Rozenfeld), together with F.I. Muzyka, Kamenev's secretary, were arrested. Within days they had retracted their innocent pleas and confirmed their plans to kill Stalin by poison or other means. When asked who directed the conspiracy, of course they answered 'Kamenev'. On 21 March Kamenev was interrogated, but the scheme to coerce Kamenev had failed. Again accepting only moral responsibility, he denied any knowledge of his brother's plot. In June Ezhov made the case that Kamenev and Zinoviev were not only 'morally complicit', but had directly participated in Kirov's murder.

[894] Khastov, Naumov, and Plotnikov, p. 601.

Kamenev had no knowledge of the plot. Everything against him was a sham. Upon his return Kamenev had employed his brother as an illustrator for 'Academia',[895] and had taken on the responsibility of two additional publishing houses, becoming the director of the Institute of Russian Literature on 4 May, and the director of the Institute of World Literature 14 June. He further wrote introductions for Turgenev's *Rudin*, and completed his introduction to *The Prince*. Yet his most time-consuming work was in arranging the collected works of Pushkin, a massive undertaking which was a labour of love that he continued to work on even in prison.[896] He had become a writer, not a reborn revolutionary.

During the interrogation Kamenev recalled that Zinoviev had worryingly told him that their arrests were akin to the 30 June 1934 arrests in Nazi Germany, 'the Night of the Long Knives', when Adolf Hitler had ordered the arrests and executions of Ernst Röhm, Kurt von Schleicher and hundreds of others. Whilst Röhm and Schleicher had real potential for political activity in Germany, Kamenev and Zinoviev had essentially no means at their disposal to take any political action. Obviously displeased with the interrogation charade, when Stalin read the transcript of the proceedings he wrote in the margin that it was a 'foolish questioning of Kamenev'.[897] Kamenev was sentenced to ten years in prison.

Why then did Stalin find it necessary to implicate Kamenev and Zinoviev in Kirov's murder when the two were so far removed from politics? J. Arch Getty has shown how any dissidence to the unconfident regime was scrutinized and repressed under Stalin no matter how

[895] Kamenev had used his brother's services as an artist before in 1927, as political cartoonist for the opposition. Among his drawings were satirical drawings of Stalin.
[896] The publishing house 'Academia' flourished that year, and under his leadership provided the Soviet Union with over a thousand publications and set the standard for quality academic research and publishing for decades. See V.V. Krylov, 'Kamenevskaya Pushkiniana', *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, no. 3, 1999, p. 26-27.
[897] Ibid., p. 650.

big or small their dissent,[898] and although Getty demonstrates that Stalin perhaps wavered on what to do with Kamenev and Zinoviev, he was ultimately the deciding factor in sentencing them to death.

During the August 1936 'trial of the sixteen', Kamenev, Zinoviev, Evdokimov, Smirnov, Bakayev, Ter-Vaganyan, S.V. Mrachkovski, E.A. Dreitzer, E.S. Holtzman, I.I. Reingold, R.V. Pickel, V.P. Olberg, K.B. Berman-Yurin, I.I. Kruglyanski, M. Lurye, and N. Lurye were accused of murdering Kirov and of plotting to overthrow the leadership and seize power with the help of fascist German agents. Trotsky's assertion that Stalin did not foresee the ramifications of murdering Kamenev and Zinoviev and that he just wanted them gone is not only the best explanation for the origins of the Great Terror, but corresponds to Stalin's leading direction of moving from crisis to crisis without forethought of consequences.[899]Any bottom-up pressure for reprisals against the accused for the death of Kirov was created from years of constant iteration from Stalin's group that Kamenev and Zinoviev were 'double-dealers', 'disloyal', and 'traitors'.

Their executions were not even to draw the population's attention away from economic woes. R.W. Davies has shown that the year Stalin orchestrated the first Moscow Show Trial in 1936 the economy was stable.[900] The two's deaths, among others, were only for Stalin's psychological benefit to escape his paranoia that Kamenev and Zinoviev would somehow rise from their political graveyard and lead an assault on his leadership. Stalin used the psychodrama of Kirov's assassination to justify a move against all those whom he deemed opponents or critics

[898] J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1938*, London: Yale University Press, 2010, Kindle File, chapter 1.
[899] Trotsky, *Stalin: An Appraisal of the Man and His Influence*, p. 419-420.
[900] R.W. Davies, 'The Soviet Economy and the Launching of the Great Terror', in *Stalin's Terror Revisited*, ed., Melanie Ilic, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, p. 29.

of his rule, and he used this as the means to prepare for a major purge, to remove entire categories of those he considered disloyal or suspect, to provide the basis for the advancement of new people, to use the repression as a means of mobilising vigilance and support for his leadership, and for constructing a system of more repressive political control. In this Stalin drew lessons from Hitler's 'Night of the Long Knives', of which Kamenev was so keenly aware.

The argument that Kamenev and Zinoviev brought their 1936 punishment upon themselves for continually defying the party is highly questionable. Although they had tried with all their effort to remove Stalin from 1925-1928, there is no evidence to indicate that either Kamenev or Zinoviev had actively continued their opposition to Stalin from 1928 to the 1932 Ryutin Affair. In fact, they had wanted to join him! During the 'trial of the sixteen' the prosecutor Vyshynsky used Kamenev's Aesopian writings against him, but they were a far cry from an organised oppositional struggle.

Ezhov's threatening of Kamenev's brother and secretary in 1935 had not been enough for him to falsely confess to plotting to murder Stalin or Kirov, but by 20 August 1936, clearly Stalin had devised something to make Kamenev admit to treason as an 'enemy of the people' alongside his long-time friend and ally Zinoviev.[901] On 24 August 1936, the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union under the direction of V.V. Ulrich condemned the 16 to be shot, but it was Stalin, the trial's puppet master, who far from the proceedings on holiday rejected their plea for mercy and gave the final word to execute them. With his usual calmness, early in the morning of 25 August in the Lubyanka Kamenev met his death. All his life he had been prepared to die a revolutionary, but with his vision of socialism irrevocably destroyed with

[901] http://www.marxists.org/history/ussr/government/law/1936/moscow-trials/20/kamenev.htm

Stalin's horrific policies, he was even denied martyrdom. Not enough the man and his dream were dead, Stalin ensured his son Yuri was shot just two years later at the age of 17. His oldest son Alexander was then executed in 1939, and Kamenev's ex-wife Olga Kameneva met her end under Stalin's repression on 9 November 1941.

Final Thoughts

For someone who typically remained friends with his opponents and had no great ambition for personal power, it was strange that Kamenev died for Stalin's want of absolute political authority. In spite of all their disagreements, Kamenev's personal relationship with Lenin had been on the best terms. Trotsky wrote that Kamenev 'sincerely loved Lenin'.[902] Often in disagreement with Kamenev, Ryazanov had 'unbounded affection and endless respect' for him and the two exchanged birthday cards and letters long after both had left politics.[903] Kamenev had also befriended Zinoviev, of whom Clare Sheridan recalled 'I never heard anyone except Kamenev have a decent word for him'.[904] While Mikoyan's cordiality with Kamenev has already been recounted, Kamenev did have friendly relations outside his own party. The Trudovik V.B. Stankevich recalled from 1917 that Kamenev 'was, undoubtedly, not the enemy...'[905] The Menshevik N.N. Sukhanov noted of his friend Kamenev that 'personally he was gentle and good-hearted'.[906] Lewis Namier who interviewed Kamenev in the UK in 1918 was surprised that despite his strong convictions he was 'ready for free discussion' and appeared 'perfectly honest'

[902] Trotsky, *Stalin: An Appraisal of the Man and His Influence*, p. 377.
[903] RAGASPI 323/2/61.
[904] Clare Sheridan, *Nuda Veritas*, London: Thornton Butterworth Limited, 1936, p. 128.
[905] V.B. Stankevich, *Vospominaniya,: 1914-1919,* Berlin: Izdatel'stvo I. P. Ladyzhnikova, 1920, p. 84-85.
[906] Sukhanov, p. 225.

and 'intelligent.'[907] The writers' circles and intelligentsia society in which Kamenev had found mutual respect and acceptance could not believe that Kamenev's work had all been a smokescreen to murder Kirov.[908] Chukovskii recounted that Kamenev was 'kind and cheerful'.[909] Although she seemed to despise his softness, Louise Bryant remembered that Kamenev liked 'to be magnanimous and promises everything to everybody.'[910] One of the only negative descriptions of his character came from Beatrice Webb, who noted that he had a 'somewhat unpleasant personage' and possessed a 'self-assured manner and easy address of one accustomed to exercise power.'[911] However, this was partly because at the time he met the Webbs he was travelling with Krasin, one of the few people with whom Kamenev had rocky relations. Stalin became Kamenev's enemy because he was incapable of doing what Kamenev could, and that was separate politics from personal relations. Until Stalin, Kamenev did not have 'enemies' and never ordered the death of anyone. Not even Kornilov, Kamenev had maintained in 1917, was deserving of such a punishment.[912] The general consensus on Kamenev's character was that he was kind, sympathetic, generous, and honest. It should be no surprise that Kamenev took so strongly to Lassalle's ideal proletariat state because it aimed to win over opponents by finding common ground. His ideological course was, in part, a reflection of Kamenev's character.

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[907] PRO F.O. 371/3315/417.
[908] Many of his literary colleagues would soon know the truth first hand when many of those who actively collaborated with Kamenev were arrested and shot. Historian R.W. Davies noted that from 1 October to 1 March 1937, an unusual number of 'anti-Soviet and Trotskyites' were arrested within publishing houses and editorial boards in the Academy of Sciences. Here we have some anecdotal evidence that arrests followed in the wake of Kamenev's trial to remove any vestiges of his supporters. Davies was absolutely right in saying that the leadership was not motivated by economic concerns. Despite Kamenev's death, it appears that Stalin vindictively eliminated Kamenev's associates. See R.W. Davies, 'The Soviet Economy and the Launching of the Great Terror', p. 26.
[909] Quoted in Krylov, 'Izdatel'stvo "Academia", p. 354.
[910] Louise Bryant, *Mirrors of Moscow,* London: G. G. Harrap & CO LTD, 1929, p. 33.
[911] Beatrice Webb, *Beatrice Webb's Diaries: 1912-1924,* London: Green and Co, 1952, p. 191.
[912] Leopold H. Haimson, *The Making of Three Revolutionaries: Voices from the Menshevik Past*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 419.

Lenin's unilinear conception of politics had created the 1912 split with the Mensheviks, ensured the break with the Second International, made enemies of fellow socialists in 1917, led to outlawing other parties, and justified force to achieve economic and political objectives. Making only a handful of gains, Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' had tried to connect socialist opponents by finding common cause through discourse but had always been rather ineffectual within the party under Lenin, drowned out by the leader's growing intolerance to dissent. Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' faired far worse under Stalin, whose party position combined with the kind of monological thinking utilised by Lenin proved the source of Kamenev's senseless death. Stalin believed there was only one true ideological position, the one espoused by him. Thus, the Lassalle of Bolshevism was needlessly crushed under the heavy Machiavellian weight of Stalin's personal dictatorship.

Conclusion

This thesis has set as its aim a detailed examination of Lev Kamenev's goals, socialist vision, motivations, and their theoretical underpinnings. It challenges the existing historiography which either presents Kamenev as an inconsequential figure, or at worst an opportunist. It has aimed to interpret his political position in terms of a consistent adherence to an ideological conception of socialism, derived from Marx and from Lassalle. In this it offers a radically new understanding of Bolshevism. Kamenev's political position is best characterised as 'Bolshevik Centrism', reflecting a commitment to find unifying inter and intra-party goals within the framework of Bolshevism. This did not mean that he was simply a man with a propensity for compromise. If that were the case, then this investigation would have been far less fruitful and not had any impact on the understanding of Bolshevism as a whole. It is of critical importance to understand that through Kamenev's words and actions it is possible to discern that his centrism was predominantly shaped by the views of Social-Democracy's founder, Ferdinand Lassalle, a hitherto neglected theoretical influence in the study of Bolshevism.

The guiding light of Kamenev's socialist vision and determination came from Lassalle. His ideas on the development of working class culture and of building a strong independent political organization brought Kamenev close to Lenin and Bogdanov in the early years of the Bolshevik party. Although Lassalle did not differ fundamentally from Marx in defining the socialist stages of development, he had a drastically different outlook as to how each stage advanced. Lassalle emphasised the necessity of raising the political strength of the proletariat in order to bind the class together culturally through party and common identity. In the 'Fourth Estate' he argued that proletarian culture had to first predominately transform society to working

class views of equality and morality before revolution. This was a more evolutionary approach to Marx, who heavily focused on revolution, with proletarian culture developing within the confines of class struggle, believing that proletarian culture would only truly develop once the conquest of power had been attained. Kamenev had tried to reconcile the two views within early Bolshevism by declaring loyalty to Lenin politically and to Bogdanov theoretically. Kamenev's understanding of social processes through a Lassallean paradigm shaped his formulation that the revolution in February 1917 was an 'incomplete' bourgeois revolution and explains why he opposed the Revolution of 1905 and the October Revolution. Without a fully developed proletarian culture and political consciousness, he judged revolution at those times to be premature.

Lassalle's influence on Kamenev persisted after the revolution. Lassalle's vision of a future socialist state without coercion set him at odds with Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, and Stalin at different times throughout his career. Lassalle's ideas also shaped Kamenev's perception of the Soviet state under NEP. Similar to Lassalle, Kamenev viewed the state as the central organising tool for building socialism and endeavoured to draw the masses closer to the state so that they would accept it as their own. This kept Kamenev from ever endorsing programme's that ran along syndicalist lines or in accepting Bukharin's rightist position which favoured capitalist models and undervalued the need to develop proletarian labour practices. It also made him adverse to repression; force would only drive the masses away from the state and make building socialism along Lassallean lines impossible.

Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' was forged within his understanding of Social-Democracy. In his time Lassalle had been able to manifest varied opinions into a unitary force of

action. Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' was a tactic that sought to not only find unifying objectives to forge compromise within his own party, but one which aspired to align all socialists in general. Unlike Lenin who assumed a monological position with the outbreak of war and cast those in disagreement with him as enemies, Kamenev focused on concrete objects that could hold divided Social-Democrats together. In 1914 he focused on the need for a Third International rather than on dismantling the Second International. Unlike Lenin, he avoided combating fellow socialists directly in the hope of later winning them round. In March 1917 Kamenev used the policy of peace to solicit Bolshevik and Menshevik unity around a common goal and at numerous points throughout the year attempted to forge cooperation. After the Petrograd Soviet had endorsed the Provisional Government's 'Liberty Loan', Lenin branded the Mensheviks and SRs traitors and brooked no compromise. Lenin and Kamenev thus moved in different directions. Although Lenin's political line ultimately defeated Kamenev's ambitions for an all-socialist multi-party state, Kamenev's open dialogue with the Mensheviks and SRs was critical in 1917. His failures emboldened Lenin's line. Kamenev was able to force Lenin's hand to invite the Left SRs into the Soviet government after the October Revolution, but that coalition was short-lived. During the civil war Kamenev sought to unify a politically diverse working class movement in England, and through dialogue with fellow socialists led the charge to curb Cheka abuse in hopes of them one day joining the Bolsheviks in government in peacetime.

Despite his desire to keep all of the 'shades of socialism' together against the bourgeoisie, it is critically important to understand that Kamenev was never a party 'rightist'. His centrism within Social-Democracy was always dependent on Bolshevik directives, meaning his desire to aid fellow socialists was more on libertarian lines rather than on agreement on theoretical

outlook. As Bolshevism evolved over time so did Kamenev's views. During the revolution of 1905, he adhered to the principles outlined in Lenin's *What is to be Done?* far more than either Bogdanov or Lenin in his opposition to the 1905 Revolution. He aided Lenin in defining the Bolshevik position and he never contemplated joining the Mensheviks. Concessions to the bourgeoisie ran contrary to the core Bolshevik premise that Social-Democracy had to retain its political independence to ensure that worker psychology developed without bourgeois influence. Kamenev differed with Lenin on tactics as to the role Russia would play, but after 1914 Kamenev supported revolutionary civil war, and historians have greatly erred in ever contending he was a 'defencist' much like Tsereteli. Despite differences with Lenin over the October Revolution, in 1918 he came round to the idea of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' to ensure the Soviet state's survival. When the Kronstadt revolt ended any possibility of a multi-party state, Kamenev acquiesced to the party majority. When NEP was introduced in 1921, it became the cornerstone of his policies for the remainder of his life. He was always a Bolshevik.

Within the party itself Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' continually endeavoured to alleviate disagreement by channelling disputes to focus on goals mutually beneficial for both sides. In 1908 he attempted to reconcile Lenin and Bogdanov with a compromise on the Duma boycott. During the civil war he was sympathetic to the Democratic Centrists and agreed to implement soviet reforms to placate their dissatisfaction. In the trade union dispute he urged Trotsky and Lenin to find agreement to keep the party from fractious debate. In 1925 he tried to rally the party around opposing the kulak danger.

Most importantly, his 'Bolshevik Centrism' aimed to maintain a balance between the party left and right throughout NEP. Kamenev better understood Lenin's final articles to be an

outline to manage NEP on a middle course. Lenin's views on cooperatives did not call for a change of direction; they were to advance the current 'state capitalism' to one of a more socialist type. To preserve this middle path Kamenev spurned Trotsky's leftist super-industrialisation proposals in 1923, attacked Stalin's 'socialism in one country', and from 1926 struggled against Bukharin's rightist line. He criticised Trotsky for advocating an economic policy that disadvantaged the peasantry. He criticised Stalin's 'socialism in one country' as a move which abandoned the international working class movement and undermined NEP's sustainability by jeopardising its connection to the international market. He criticised Bukharin's reforms for antagonising the party left by its dedication to raising the peasantry through the use of capitalist incentives. Kamenev's position on NEP cut through the very middle of these debates by attempting to counter every one deviating from the NEP model established under Lenin – 'state capitalism'.

Kamenev was stalwart in protecting the moderate course of NEP because of his theoretical opinion that the state was in fact the 'dictatorship of the party' and not the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. The point cannot be overemphasised. He had warned in 1905 and twice in 1917 that the Bolsheviks were taking the path of the Jacobins. After the seizure of power he well understood that they had in fact established a 'dictatorship of the party' and not a proletarian state. This drastically set him apart from Lenin, Bukharin, Stalin, and Trotsky who claimed that by capturing the state apparatus they had in fact established a working class state. Lenin, for example, promoted the *smychka* to balance the proletarian state and the peasantry. Kamenev supported the *smychka*, but not just to connect the state with the peasantry, but to use it as a policy to win *both* workers and peasants round to the state. Tipping NEP to favour either

class risked jeopardizing their relationship with the other. When Kamenev allied with Krupskaya, Sokol'nikov, and Zinoviev on the 'platform of the four' in 1925, it was to safeguard 'state capitalism' and the 'dictatorship of finance' centrist NEP position which provided income for the state from bourgeois traders and higher income peasants. It was rather unfortunate that Kamenev's colleagues failed to grasp his Lassalle inspired idea on individual profit sharing as it would have served to aid both peasant and worker alike, bring them closer to the state, and truly try to establish socialist labour policies. The party rejected the idea because Lenin, Bukharin, Trotsky, and Stalin had all justified utilising capitalist and exploitive labour policies to fill state coffers on the grounds a proletarian state was already in existence and thus exploitation impossible. When his 'Bolshevik Centrism' brought him into common cause with Zinoviev and Trotsky in the United Opposition the alliance retained numerous centrist NEP 'platform of the four' policies and was never a capitulation to high-flung leftist idealism.

There were serious drawbacks to Kamenev's position. At each important juncture within the development of Bolshevism he had different allies. His support base was rather thin because his positions often wavered depending on the unifying policy he hoped to achieve. This therefore meant that when trying to mediate disagreement he typically never had any followers generally backing his every move like Stalin or Zinoviev. In some cases, such as when he tried to restore relations between Bogdanov and Lenin from 1907 to 1908 on an alternative boycott scheme, he had no supporters whatsoever. In 1917, Sokol'nikov and Ryazanov were his allies throughout, but Zinoviev, Lunacharsky, Stalin, and Nogin all backed and opposed him at different points in the year. During the civil war Kamenev found common cause with Gorky, Bukharin, and Lunacharsky against repression, but sparred with the latter two later under NEP. Rykov was

Kamenev's ally in 1905 and in 1917, but he was his fierce opponent in 1925 and beyond. At other times such as when Bukharin sought his council in 1928 and when Ryutin's group had hopes Kamenev and Zinoviev would aid their cause in 1932, Kamenev's principles held him back from getting entangled in their affairs. His 'Bolshevik Centrism' typically placed him as a mediator between groups. As time progressed, the party left and right became much more rigid and thus Kamenev's influence dwindled as few gravitated to the centre. Until 1923 with Trotsky he had few political enemies, but afterwards the party grew lukewarm to his compromising behaviour as many unfairly blamed him and Zinoviev for the rupture with Trotsky. Stalin used intrigue to remove Kamenev from his post as chair of the Moscow Soviet to avoid potential backlash, but that proved overcautious as after seven years of heading MPO there was little resistance when Uglanov rolled up the entire organisation to unquestionably follow Bukharin and Stalin in 1925.

Kamenev and Zinoviev were friends, but contrary to the views of most historians, they were not unconditional allies. The idea that Zinoviev and Kamenev were in accord on nearly every policy must finally be put to rest. Before the revolution Zinoviev stood with Lenin when Kamenev came into disagreement with the party leader. Zinoviev did not aid Kamenev in his efforts to find a compromise between Lenin and Bogdanov and he certainly did not support him in trying to prevent the party from taking up arms for revolution in 1905 and in 1917 Zinoviev aligned with Lenin's *April Theses* against Kamenev. The two opposed the October Revolution, but soon after Zinoviev capitulated to Lenin. During the civil war Zinoviev was not among Kamenev's allies in confronting Lenin and Dzerzhinsky on the excessive reliance on repression, nor did he advocate returning to a multi-party state. Their alliance only truly solidified when they

forged the ‘troika’ with Stalin, and even then Kamenev backed Stalin against Zinoviev, Bukharin, and Trotsky’s attempt to reform the Secretariat at the Kislovodsk ‘cave conference’ out of principle. Kamenev’s alliances were first and foremost out of ideological agreement, not power politics. The reason the two got on well with each other from 1923 onward was because more often than not Zinoviev endorsed Kamenev’s position.

With Kamenev’s heavy Lassallean influence and his ‘Bolshevik Centrism’, it is no longer tenable to maintain that Kamenev was an ‘inveterate intriguer’ for political gain or that he lacked vision. This work has demonstrated that Kamenev’s ideological perspective was the reason he challenged Trotsky and backed Stalin in 1923. Kamenev could not sanction Trotsky and Preobrazhensky’s ‘primitive socialist accumulation’ as it negatively impacted both workers and peasants alike. The state to him was not proletarian, and Trotsky’s policies would have driven the masses away from embracing the state as their own. He had denigrated Trotsky for his ‘Menshevism’ and helped create ‘Trotskyism’ to sully his image beyond what his ideological convictions warranted, but resorting to intrigue was not his customary modus operendi. Trotsky had left Kamenev little choice with his continual rejection of compromise and his perpetual attacks on the leadership. Kamenev desired Trotsky’s expulsion from the Politburo, but was willing to cooperate with him as Commissar of War. He wanted to deprive him of his ideological influence on the party and the state’s theoretical line, but did not want him removed from the political scene altogether. Trotsky was a socialist and not an enemy.

Kamenev’s approach to politics in general was rather naïve. He always assumed that his socialist opponents were as ideologically driven as himself. When the struggle with Trotsky began, Kamenev assumed he and Stalin were both in agreement at the outset that the present

'state capitalist' model of NEP should continue. He therefore turned a blind eye to Stalin stacking the party against Trotsky and was wholly unprepared for Stalin's pursuit of power and his course change to 'socialism in one country'. Stalin enabled Bukharin's line to triumph over the 'platform of the four' and the United Opposition, and then shifted left to best Bukharin. Kamenev thought Stalin's movement leftwards was legitimate and even after he had contemplated violently overthrowing Stalin and Bukharin's government in 1927 as part of the United Opposition, he prostrated himself before Stalin between 1928-1929 when he believed Stalin's policy shift brought the two closer together. Kamenev was confident he could earn Stalin's trust to move the party to a more centrist position to overcome the party right. Stalin had no desire to share power and spurned their involvement. Zinoviev and Sapronov had warned Kamenev of Stalin's abuse of power in 1924, but Kamenev had thought they were exaggerating. They were not, and Stalin became so paranoid of losing power after his disastrous collectivisation campaign that he in time framed Kamenev and Zinoviev and charged them with moral complicity in the murder of Kirov and orchestrated a sham trial to have the two executed.

Kamenev was himself to blame for unwittingly helpingly facilitate the rise of Stalin's brutal dictatorship. His alliance with Stalin was just as much out of ideological consideration as was his opposition to Trotsky. Believing that the Bolshevik regime in Soviet Russia represented the 'dictatorship of the party', following Lassalle Kamenev felt the amalgamation of the party and state was an absolute necessity to bring the masses round to the Communist cause through state institutions. The historian T.H. Rigby has demonstrated that Lenin's government relied much more on Sovnarkom for decision making than the party Politburo.[913] When Lenin left

[913] See Rigby, *Lenin's Government: Sovnarkom 1917-1922,* p. 155.

Kamenev as head of the government there had been a tangible division of duties between Sovnarkom and the Politburo. However, due to Kamenev's theoretical belief that the party had to connect to the masses through the state, he voluntarily ceded state authority to the party, and consequently, Stalin. That was why he was the first to embrace Lenin's proposal to reorganise Rabkrin to provide effective party oversight over state institutions. Lenin had hoped to curtail capitalist elements emerging under NEP. Out of disagreement with Trotsky, Kamenev and Zinoviev helped Stalin by ignoring his abuse of power as the General Secretary and even saved his position when Lenin's testament called for his removal. Then when Stalin began to deviate from NEP through his 'socialism in one country' and to back Bukharin's NEP reforms, the authority Kamenev had helped endow him with enabled Stalin to best Kamenev and to subject STO to Politburo approval. This stripped Kamenev of his leading role in the affairs of state. With Kamenev having lost his direct role over the economy, Bukharin was able to put NEP on a path Kamenev rightfully felt was both economically unfeasible and ideologically contradictory to building socialism. Then his continual assault on Bukharin's economic line prepared the way for Stalin's left course. The General Secretary made use of Kamenev's fear of a growing kulak and economic prognoses to assail Bukharin. Albeit Stalin used violence and brutal repression rather than economic remedies, Kamenev and the left had given Stalin the ideological means and economic understanding to thwart Bukharin.

Ultimately Kamenev's 'Bolshevik Centrism' failed to have any lasting influence. Kamenev was a master negotiator and could organise alliances and find common ground better than any Bolshevik politician. He was the essential link in the 'troika', the 'platform of the four' and the United Opposition. However, his greatest achievements were all in the end undone. His

unification of the British labour movement in 1920 under the COA, getting the Left SRs into the government, negotiating the Vikzhel talks to accept an all-socialist government, improving NEP with the stabilisation of the ruble and the monetary tax on the peasantry, and his successful negotiations with the bourgeoisie to aid the Soviet government in abating the terrible famine in the Volga, were all in some capacity wrecked by either Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin or Stalin.

Lenin's monlogism, forged in 1914 in response to his fellow socialists' abandonment of revolution, eventually became the party's core value after Kronstadt. The Bolsheviks saw themselves as the sole organisation in the world that knew the true path to socialism. This was one of the key conflicts between Lenin and Kamenev in 1917, as Kamenev felt there were 'shades of socialism' and that a broad 'revolutionary democracy' was needed to affect socialist change. When Lenin's uncompromising line defeated Kamenev's, at first it served to alienate the Bolsheviks from their fellow socialists. Intra-party discussion remained open. Prior to Kronstadt there was the Military Opposition, the Democratic Centralists, the Workers' Opposition and Left Communists.

The X Party Congress ban on factions put an end to intra-party dissent with demands for unquestioning support for the official party line as set by determined by party congresses and conferences. Kamenev tried to salvage his dialogical position by being rather lenient to opposition groups within the party despite the faction ban. He did so because he felt that they expressed legitimate concerns and under his leadership Moscow tolerated greater debate than any other place in the country. Against Trotsky he thought he was removing one of the most uncompromising and immovable personalities from formulating the party's theoretical direction, but he was mistaken. Stalin developed Lenin's monologism and showed no tolerance to

ideologically dissenting views or for those desiring an equal role in decision making. Through his leading role in the party he unleashed invectives, insults, and venomous slander in a denunciation campaign orchestrated to eradicate opposition to his authority and to aid in defining what the party's true 'Leninist' ideology was by establishing what it was not. Kamenev, Zinoviev, and Trotsky were all at the receiving end of his intolerance. With the party under Stalin and Bukharin's unbending rule and their intent to crush fellow Communists, the United Opposition began to think of themselves as a separate party. Their greatest desire to overthrow Stalin's government, however, remained nothing but an unachievable dream.

In the end Kamenev's Lassallean vision to establish a socialist society where opponents were not coerced into accepting proletarian rule but were instead converted through positive example was irrevocably destroyed with Stalin's nightmarish collectivisation campaign. This was what Kamenev believed, but the truth of the matter is that his vision had truly become incompatible with Bolshevism once it was clear there would not be a multi-party state. His efforts to turn the one-party dictatorship into an all-encompassing political organ capable of reflecting the views of the masses bereft of political agency by merging it with the state apparatus was never going to work within the framework of a party with such an ingrained rigidness in ideological outlook and propensity for leftist illusions. The monologism that became predominant within Bolshevism meant a tightening of political dictatorship when the state and the party unified. Kamenev's inability to effectively rein in state-sponsored coercion meant winning over the masses was impossible. Much can be blamed on Stalin and his unrelenting pursuit of power, but it was Lenin who trampled on Lassalle's Social-Democratic vision of a future socialist republic when he effectively declared war on his socialist opponents from 1914 onward and when

later he, Trotsky, and Bukharin justified repression and coercion as key principles in building socialism. However, it was not until the blood-letting in the countryside during the Soviet Union's First Five-Year Plan that Kamenev felt his 'Bolshevik Centrism' no longer had any possibility to forge a socialist state. He surrendered his dream and political work and turned to literature. Paranoid of losing power, Stalin set his sights on Kamenev and orchestrated his arrest and execution. It was fitting that in Kamenev's last years through his Aesopian writing he reflected on Stalin's malicious behaviour and positioned him as Machiavelli and himself as Lassalle.

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